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OF
PROFESSOR GEORGE S. MORRIS,

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the 1990s, the number of people in the UK who are employed in the public sector has increased by 1.5 million, from 2.5 million in 1980 to 4 million in 1995. The public sector has also become an important employer of women, with 50% of public sector employees being women in 1995.

There are a number of reasons why the public sector has become an important employer of women. One reason is that the public sector has a high proportion of female employees in the lower pay grades, which are often the most attractive to women. Another reason is that the public sector has a high proportion of female employees in the higher pay grades, which are often the most attractive to men. A third reason is that the public sector has a high proportion of female employees in the public sector, which is often the most attractive to women. A fourth reason is that the public sector has a high proportion of female employees in the public sector, which is often the most attractive to women.

The public sector has also become an important employer of women because of the increasing number of women who are in the workforce. The number of women in the workforce has increased from 1.5 million in 1980 to 3.5 million in 1995. This increase has been driven by a number of factors, including the increasing number of women who are in the workforce, the increasing number of women who are in the workforce, and the increasing number of women who are in the workforce.

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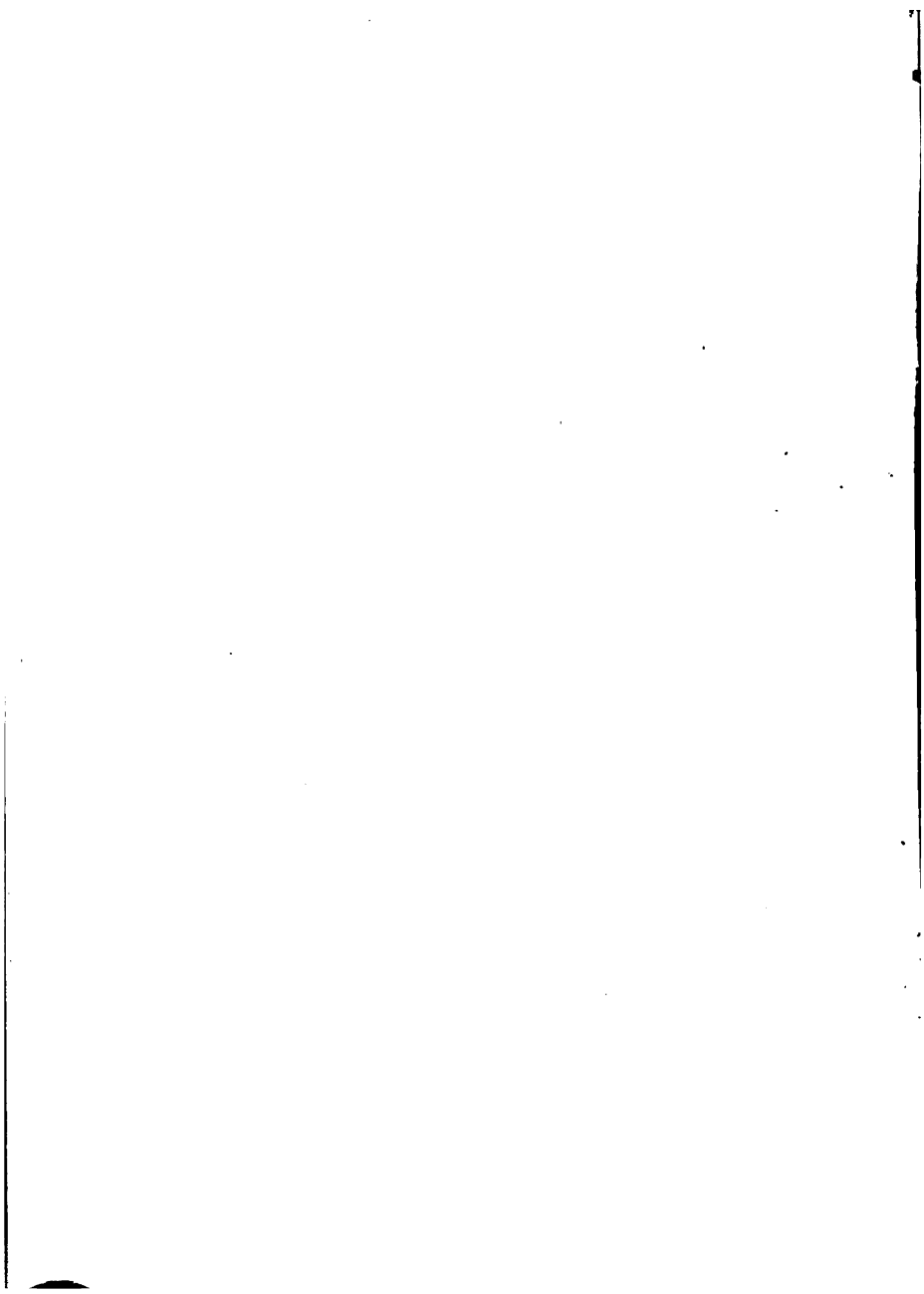
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THE SON OF MAN
IN
HIS RELATION TO THE RACE



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THE SON OF MAN

IN

HIS RELATION TO THE RACE

A RE-EXAMINATION OF
THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW, XXV. 31-46

LONDON
LONGMANS, GREEN, AND CO.

AND NEW YORK : 15 EAST 16th STREET

1888

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DEDICATED,
WITH WARMEST ADMIRATION,
To the Memory of a Woman
WHOSE PUREST JOY IT WAS
TO LISTEN TO THE CRY OF DISTRESS AND DRY
THE TEAR OF SORROW
AND WHO THUS DEMONSTRATED THAT
SHE WAS
A CHRISTIAN

PREFACE

THE sayings of Jesus are the thoughts that yet breathe, and the words that still burn. They will never die. Their vitality is more strikingly manifest than ever.

The dust raised in the old battle-fields of theological controversy still floats in the atmosphere of religion, and rather obscures our vision of the Christ. But modern, earnest, inquiry seeks Christ Himself and will be content only as it hears His voice. "How do we know but what some Peter (even though he might be a bishop), standing in the porch of truth, warming himself among the priests' servants, may not be denying the very Christ whose utterances alone we want to hear? At any rate let us hear Christ first and the Churches afterwards." True, my friend!

Recd. MUP. 7-10-40

This is a hopeful sign of the times. These men are seeking after God. And it is in this spirit the writer has endeavoured to learn what Christ said about the subject of this Essay.

If his view be *new*, it is not necessarily true ; but it is not necessarily false. It unfolds a conviction which years have only strengthened.

As the subject grew clearer, it became increasingly evident that the relations of Judaism to Christianity, and the relations of Christianity to heathenism, had not, by those who laid the foundations of the creeds of Christendom, been at all adequately discriminated. Instead of being clearly differentiated from Judaism, the good wine of Christianity has been run into the old bottles of Judaism, to the confusion of letter and spirit, of form and substance, and of chronological relation.

Christianity emerging from Judaism, took on many forms of Jewish law and observance. The earliest converts and teachers were Jews. The Law was *their* schoolmaster to bring them to Christ. But Gentile converts to Christianity did

not, and were never intended, to pass through the forms of this school at all.

Christianity came to the Greeks at Athens not in the garb of the sacrificial priests,—but as certain of their poets had hinted, as the revelation of the universal Father. And missionary Christianity, going into all the world, is charged to conduct its converts no more through the portals of Judaism than through the dismal swamps and wildernesses of Eastern or Western Theology. Its burden is simply to preach the *glad tidings* to every creature under heaven, wisely adapting its form to the nation's best spiritual conceptions and aptitudes, through which they may be feeling after God. Would not this be following exactly the example of the Apostles, in the use of the habits of thought and practice of the people, to whom they first took the Gospel?

Perhaps we ought not to be very much surprised at the perplexities and confusion of Theological dogma, when we call to mind the frequent blunders of our Lord's immediate disciples, in the

interpretation and application of their Master's words.

In a recent utterance by a leader in one of England's Free Churches another source of confusion is pointed out to us. "There is the habit of hopping about through the Bible, choosing a text, now here and now there, from Genesis to Revelation, to the neglect of continuous exposition. One lesson taught by Church history is, that the want or deficiency of faithful exposition is almost as disastrous as a mutilated Bible would be. . . . *The Bible has not got fair play.*"¹

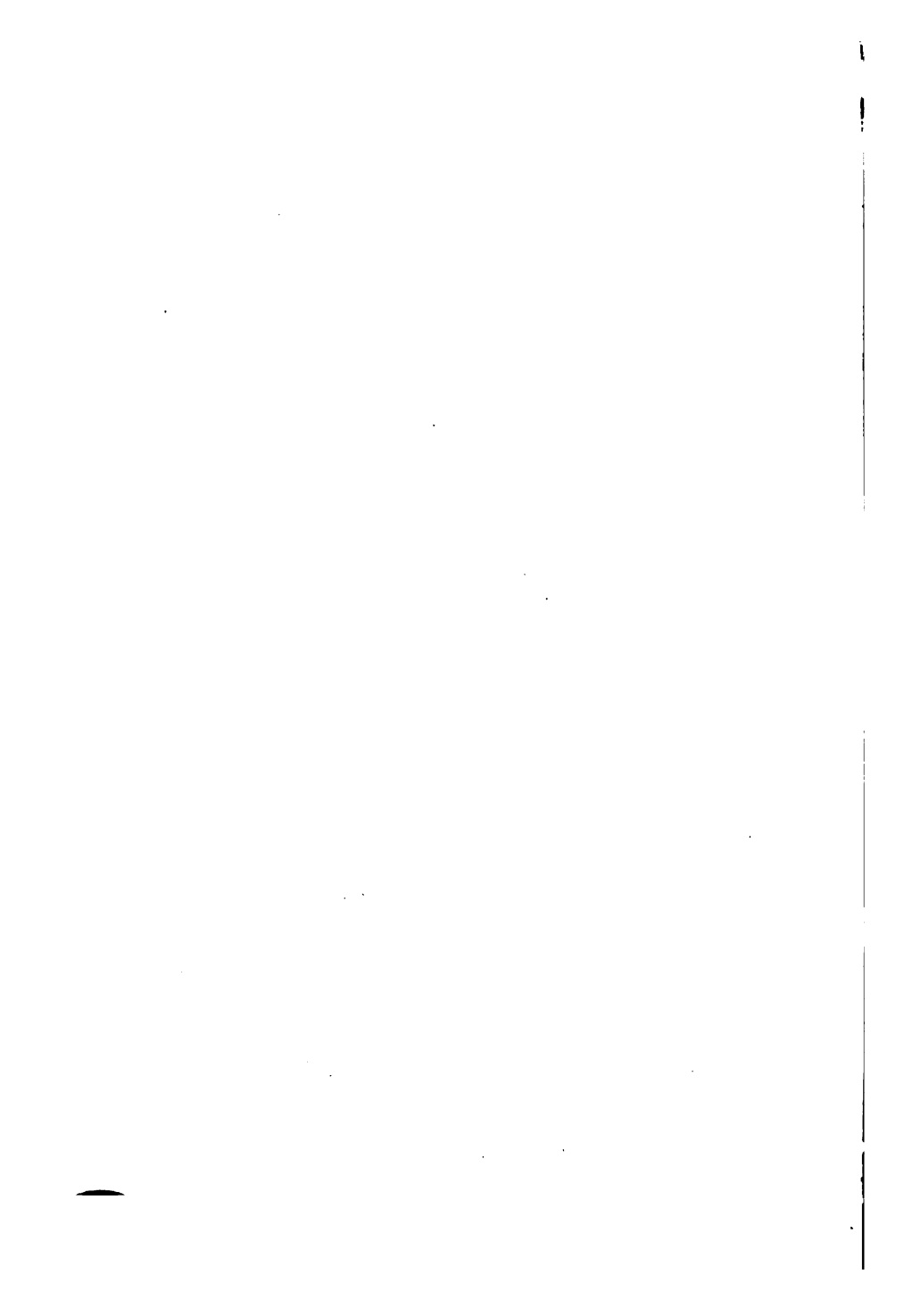
In the passage of Scripture herein discussed, except for an incidental pastoral comparison, there is nothing more *specially* Jewish than there is in the Sermon on the Mount. "And if the Epistles were read with the historical spirit fairly awake, the necessary distinction would always be drawn between the discussions and exhortations addressed to the Churches for whom these Epistles were written, and the general principles which

¹ Rev. Dr. Culross.

are equally applicable to the race, through all time. It is to this oversight and confusion that many mistakes are to be attributed."

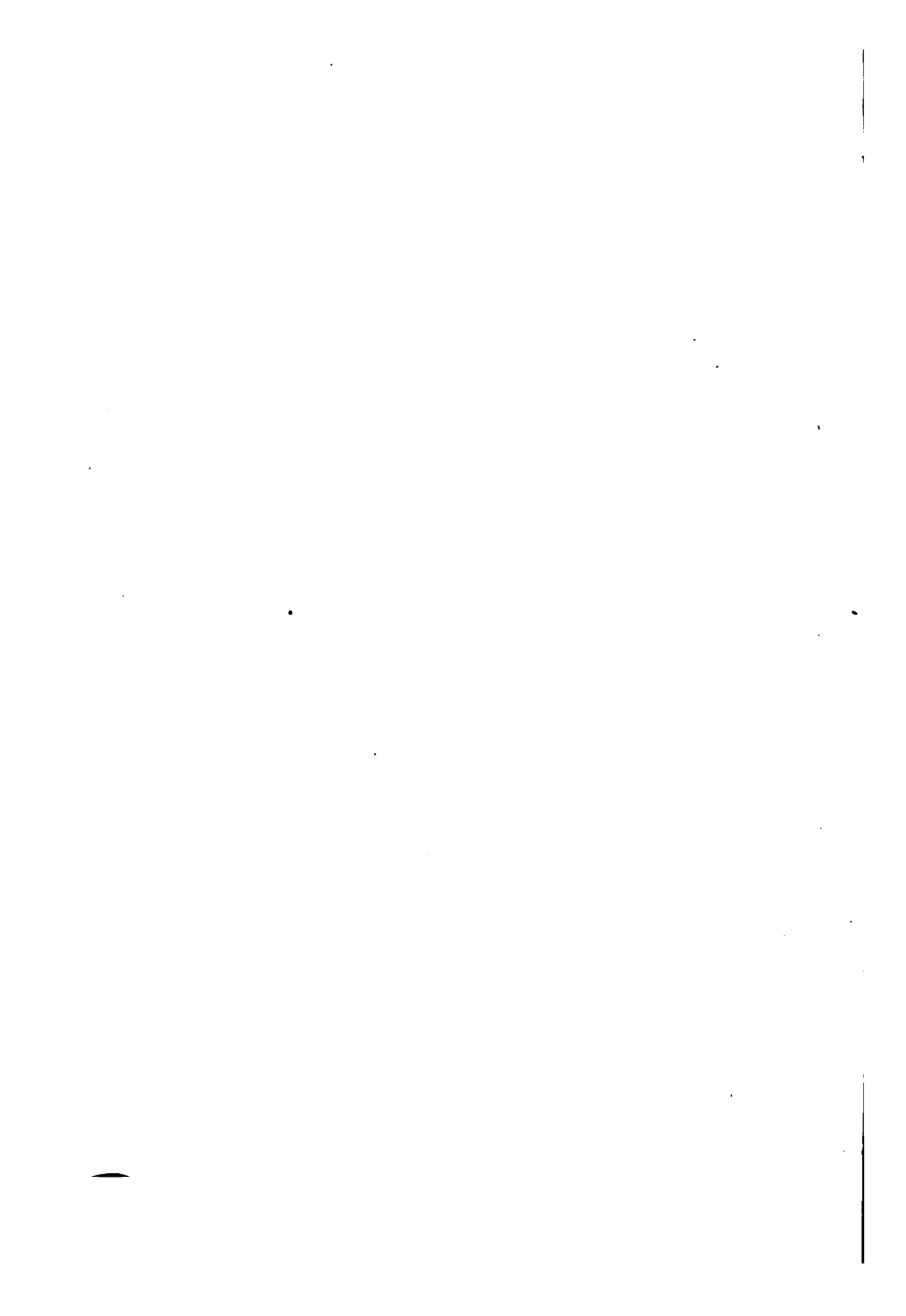
To have done full justice to his subject these suggestions should have been carried out by an examination of the whole of the sacred Writings bearing on it. As it is, only a few references are made to parallel passages, as hints which may be acted upon hereafter.

June 1888.



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PRELIMINARY

“It is not for you to know the times and seasons” (Acts I. 7).

“We look not at the things which are seen” (2 Cor. iv. 18).

To perceive facts in their relation to time is much more easy to the popular mind than to appreciate laws in relation to principles.

Into the world of things seen and temporal we are born, and we imagine our interests and happiness depend upon these.

The spiritually-minded occupy a higher region. They look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen, for the things that are seen are temporal, but those which are not seen are not subject to the conditions of time.

But to those who are unconscious of this larger faculty and higher mode of being, the phenomena of existence are apprehended mainly in their successional relations. Life is either history or prophecy. Put a stop to Greenwich time, make

existence independent of eating and drinking, let night and morning cease to follow one another, have done with past and future, and for the many what is there left?

Our Lord was repressive of the spirit which would draw aside the veil of futurity, and which would pry into times and seasons. Yet the indications of what is to come to pass, and the question of "the last things," have a charm which is far more fascinating than profitable.

Human history, indeed, affords considerable scope for the *imagination*, in the restatement and grouping of facts, and even in tracing their influence in moulding proximate destiny. But it is a somewhat humdrum business. The *tabula rasa* of the remote future, stretching out into the abysses of eternity, without the scratch of an event on its unsullied surface, is to our "prophetical student" a very paradise.

We are thinking of those whose belief in a superintending Providence would not allow them to consult a fortune-telling book without a sense of profanity; and who would turn to astrology with a keen interest, did they not shrink from a

dalliance with a fatalism of which they would feel ashamed.

But there are others besides those who cultivate it as a religious amusement, to whom the distant future is an attractive field.

Eschatology naturally culminates in "the final judgment"—a phrase as familiar as it is unscriptural.

This "final judgment" has been forged into a most formidable and effectual weapon by priests in all ages—both pagan and Christian. The popular preacher, too, of no very remote period in the past, has wielded it as his most polished shaft.

The "God that judgeth in the earth" has, to a great extent, been superseded by "the judgment day at the end of the world." God is set forth as an accountant with a big ledger-shaped book, the transactions of which are to be dealt with at a period indefinitely remote.

The final judgment, however, though not a Scripture expression, may be accepted if used, as it is employed in these pages, to express a decision or sentence from which there can be no appeal—

the decision of unerring wisdom and goodness. The moral judgments of men may be mistaken, or warped, or perverted. The law they administer may be imperfect or inadequate in its enactments and its sanctions. For a judgment to be absolutely *final*, the law must be perfect, and its administrator in perfect harmony with it.

The *essential* relations of mankind to the Eternal God must, under all dispensations and circumstances, remain the same from the beginning even until now. It is only the methods and forms of administration which have varied. And whether Adamic, Patriarchal, Mosaic, or Christian, the fundamental principle of reward and punishment remains undisturbed through all of them.

But the Bible can hardly be a book for amusing the ingenuity of prying curiosity: nor does it present to us a wheel of fortune from which the wise and prudent may snatch a ticket for a splendid prize at a future grand distribution. Much less is it an engine in the hands of a power-loving priest, who, by flattering promises of heavenly treasure, promotes his own self-aggrandisement, or by vague alarms of future endless torture finds it easy to

terrorise over the darkened consciences and sordid fears of his ignorant dupes.

No, the Bible cannot be such a book ; nor have its brilliant successes as a transforming power over the individual and society been achieved by such uses as these. It is full of God and man : of human life with its everyday joys and sorrows, and of the loving Father's sympathy with His frail and erring children. Full of man's goodness and badness, according to the judgment of a just God and a Saviour, who will render to every man according to his works.

And this is true of all the ages of the world. What we call the last dispensation is only in a subordinate sense—a chronological sense—final. It is the Lord's supremacy which has ever been maintained, and which has been shadowed forth, and only less fully embodied in previous eras to the one in which we live to-day. The Christ is the Alpha and Omega of all law and government. Why should it be necessary to point out this to readers of the Scriptures which tell us plainly that it was by the Son the ages were constituted ? Did not our Lord Himself declare : " Before

Abraham was, I am ?” The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews never loses sight of the Christ who by His spirit endowed men with superhuman energy, as Moses who, we are told, accounted the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt (Heb. xi. 26). This large conception of the Christ was entertained by Paul, who by way of illustration (in 1 Cor. x. 4), identifies the refreshing of the famished Israelites in the wilderness by water from the rock, with the Christ. And this same Lord and Christ we identify with Him who sits upon the throne of judgment,—the Son of man, the very organ of God,—the eternal law of moral and spiritual beings,—the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.

Whether disclosed through the early channel of divine promise, or amid the dim shadows of the Law, or borne on the wings of the everlasting Gospel, we perceive Jesus. This is a point on which hangs a great deal more than at first sight appears, and it must not be lost sight of in a discussion of the subject of this essay.

There is “a light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world.” It has ever shone. It is

shining now. God is not far from every one of us, for in Him we live and move and have our being, as even the Greek poets have also taught. He gives to all of us our possibilities and our abundant opportunities, and of their use or abuse there is an infallible register in the very constitution with which our Creator has endowed us.

If not strict to mark iniquity, God is assuredly swift to do so. Judgment delayeth not. He plentifully rewardeth the proud doer, and He preserveth faithfulness (Ps. xxxi. 23). He would teach righteousness, therefore are His judgments abroad in the earth ; and of this we hope to give abundant evidence in what follows.

But the doctrine of "an end of the world" with a final winding up of the affairs of Time, in an universal distribution of rewards and punishments, commends itself to human nature. It has acquired strength among men's convictions through its harmony with the institutions of religion and civilisation under which their lives have been wrought out.

To those who seek pleasure as the end of their existence, without being particularly squeamish as

to the way in which they elbow their way through the crowd to reach it, a final judgment at the end of the world is a very small matter. It carries with it a very feeble, if any, force to curb the passions or deter from evil. It can do nothing whatever for the soul's purification from self, or shatter the idols of its worship. It lies too far off in the dim and distant future to be of any practical importance to most, and there is a vague notion that, if ever it should become a fact, they may manage by some priestly or evangelical method to square accounts before that great day dawns.

To those endowed with some measure of spiritual sensibility the scene is gross and degrading. The popular description of this unique crisis in the history of mankind is to the shrewd man of the world very unlikely, not to say impossible. It looks so like the Central Criminal Court, and is so incongruous in its sensuous details, and so wanting in homogeneity, as to the events by which it is to be ushered in, and in the consequences which are to succeed it, that it is simply a stumbling-block in the way of their accepting the divine government in any form whatever. To

such, a more worthy, because truer presentation of the doctrine of Jesus on this subject, may, with God's blessing, help a few in their earnest wish to accept the teaching of Scripture.

What a source of terror and spiritual degradation "the final judgment" has been in the hands of persecuting priests, Church history reveals too clearly. We don't like to express ourselves harshly, but where can these hardened terrorists stand in the judgment, if they take not their places by the scribes and the pharisees of our Lord's day, to share with them His burning denunciations?

I

THE JUDGMENT SEAT OF CHRIST

Matthew xxv. 31-46.

MATTHEW'S Gospel was written primarily for Palestinian Jews. As we read his life of the Christ, we discover not only all previous Scripture history and prophecy converging on Jesus ; but, what is still more remarkable, we find his conception of, and his sympathy with the kingdom of heaven, overleaping the narrower limits of Israelitish hope and expectation, and embracing all the peoples of the earth. He appears to have been more deeply impressed than the other Evangelists with the *universality* of the kingdom of heaven. We are indebted to Matthew alone, though a Hebrew of the Hebrews, for the story of the Magi, and the flight into Egypt ; the Syro-Phœnician

woman's conversation with the Christ is given by Matthew while omitted by Luke. And but for Matthew, who alone gives it, we might have missed this magnificent picture of the world-wide kingdom.¹

Let us look carefully at the parable of the sheep and the goats, as it is sometimes called, and after trying to interpret it according to the mind of Christ, we will look at the context and other scriptures and ascertain how far our exposition is thereby sustained.

"But when the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the angels with him,² then shall he sit on the throne of his glory: and before him shall be gathered all the nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as the shepherd separateth the sheep from the goats: and he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: for I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in; naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. Then shall the righteous

¹ How is it that the Church, in her commemorative acts, has so feebly recognised Matthew as compared with other apostles, or even some of the saints?

² In Jude, verse 15, revised version, we have a parallel description, "Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of His holy ones."

answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or athirst, and gave thee drink? And when saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? And when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of these my brethren, *even* these least, ye did it unto me. Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into the eternal fire which is prepared for the devil and his angels: for I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me not in; naked, and ye clothed me not; sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not. Then shall they also answer, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee? Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not unto one of these least, ye did it not unto me. And these shall go away into eternal punishment: but the righteous into eternal life" (Matt. xxv. 31-46).

We take the representation in its entirety to be nothing less than AN EPITOME OF THE PRINCIPLES AND PROCESSES OF THE DIVINE GOVERNMENT.

Could any human mind produce so grand and yet so intensely human a picture? The very completest expression of the inflexibility and im-

partiality of divine tenderness and sympathy! Where is the genius that could work such a spell on the imagination with materials so few and so simple? How sublime the glorious throne, the attendants, the great gathering, the discrimination of the mass and its separation into two great companies! How clear and yet how comprehensive the ground of division—nothing but conduct! The treatment of the hungry, the thirsty, the stranger, the naked, the sick, the captive.

The central object of the picture is the judgment seat. It is majestic and regal as well as judicial; for in describing the process of executive function, the Son of man is designated "the King." "Then shall the King say," etc.

The picture, in the first instance, is placed before the select twelve, and through them it is presented to the nation in which our Lord was born, and to which He was specially sent. It is adapted to their habits of thought and common life—to their conceptions of polity and ideas of administration. "We have our law," they would argue with great pertinacity; and they had their lawgiver, Moses.

So "Jesus spake to the multitudes and to His disciples, saying, The scribes and the pharisees sit on Moses' seat" (Matt. xxiii. 1-2).

Practically, and putting it in the frame of this mental picture, we may truly say that God had, in the dispensation which was tottering to its fall, summoned the Israelites to appear before Moses' judgment seat. The law of Moses was promulgated with much pomp and circumstance, and its very practical sanctions were duly expounded by its appointed teachers, and were rigorously observed and enforced among the people.

There were well-defined national idiosyncrasies to be respected, and sharp lines of demarcation from the surrounding heathen to be maintained. There was also a minute system of religious personal and social observances which gave a special character to the legislation of that race. Its entire form was in harmony with the earthly state of the Jewish congregation, and it was accordingly characterised by material rewards and penalties. Nevertheless the *essence* of the Jewish law was Christian. *The substance was Christ.*

Perfectly familiar to the Jews, then, was the judgment seat. And although the Christ's throne is here called the throne of His glory, the Jews would readily identify it with the seat of judgment, as described by Jesus Himself.

Yet we catch a tone of ineffable sweetness and beauty in the fact that the judgment seat of the Son of *man* is the throne of *His* glory. For what was and what is now His glory? There is nothing analogous in it to that which gives dignity and grandeur and stability to the throne of the Pharaohs or the Cæsars. It is not dynastic; though we get a glimpse of something like it when we read of "King Solomon in all his glory," and of "the throne of his father David," and as we glance at the tables of our Lord's genealogy. But if all the hereditary and dynastic privileges of earthly empire had converged upon and had culminated in the birth of the babe of Bethlehem, what lustre could it have added to His essential dignity and spiritual power, as it dawns on the eyes of our understanding? and as we find as a fact of our experience that He is actually reigning over our hearts, and subduing in our lives all

things to Himself? In presence of this sway, this kingdom, this throne, all mere human descent and earthly splendour vanish away in the mists of Time. His kingdom not less than His kingdom are not of this world. "But Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever; the sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of Thy kingdom." "The heir of all things" could hardly receive honour from men.

But "we have seen His glory, as of the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth," in His humanity, His suffering, His self-abnegation, in giving Himself for the life of the world. For the glorious throne is the outgrowth of the tree planted on Calvary. And we may well glory in it. It is glorified humanity: glorified in the deeds of mercy which He Himself wrought, for "He bare our infirmities, and carried our sorrows;" and similar lives and deeds He looks for in those gathered before Him. "Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into His glory?"

The glory of the kingdoms of this world is measured by the extent to which, by force, they have subjugated or absorbed other nations. The

glory of a Napoleon, who lays waste vast fields of humanity, dazzles the world. There have been rulers who have trampled under foot their own law. Could anything be more grotesque than a sovereign ruler out of all harmony with his legislation? The Son of man could administer no other law than the law of His own life. Had there been a higher law He would have loved it and would have administered it too.

When Paul was summoned to appear before the Roman tribunal, he said: "I am standing before Cæsar's judgment seat, where I ought to be judged. . . . I appeal unto Cæsar." There, too, stood our divine Lord: and from what took place on that occasion, it is evident that Cæsar sometimes afforded a better protection and a fairer trial than a perverted "Moses."¹ Has the professedly Christian Church never acted under a perverted "Jesus"?

But here we come upon a fact of special and startling interest to the disciples and to the Jews generally.

¹ See also Acts xviii. 12, 16, 17; xxv. 17; Romans xiv. 10; James ii. 6.

Moses' seat was about to be superseded by the glorious throne of the Christ. The scope of Moses' legation and administration was national, that of the Son of man universal—for a greater than *Moses is here*.

When the Jewish people looked back to the giving of the law, they would recall a mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire, a blackness, and darkness, and tempest, and the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words. Could anything illustrate more strikingly the rudimentary religious condition of the race? The physical phenomena addressed themselves to the sensuousness of a people who could be reached through no higher mode of manifestation. But when the Son of man should come and all the angels¹ with Him, then would He sit upon the throne of His glory.

Surely no Christian, nowadays, however humble his attainments, expects to see a material throne with such outward shows of things as become

¹ His messengers, prophets, ministers, who had lived in previous ages, as others would yet live, to testify of Christ's kingdom and government, and to be preachers of His gospel.

an earthly monarch. The manifestation is purely spiritual and therefore abiding. The angels, or messengers, around the throne are present in the power and influence of their teaching and ministry.

True, the events preceding the disclosure of the kingdom of Christ to the nation of the Jews, touched, nay overturned, the theocracy, with all its institutions and ecclesiastical practices and duties. These events included wars and rumours of wars, times of extraordinary national trouble, physical suffering to which their chequered history was strange, and such as would not be paralleled in the future: for they were connected with the close of a dispensation whose characteristics were earthly and material. The house must be left desolate. The stones of the temple must be thrown down. For, henceforth, when the Son of man should be seated on His throne the visible temple would become an anachronism, and Jerusalem would cease to be the city of God and the joy of the whole earth. The temporal would be merged in the eternal—the visible in the invisible. And for the priesthood, the altar, the sacrifices,

the scribes and Pharisees and Levites, there would now be no place. And when Jesus drew this graphic picture, so full of incident and revelation, things that were grown old were ready to vanish away.

And, henceforth, if the priest would enter the kingdom, he must disrobe, and become a little child. The altar of sacrifice must give place to the altar of humanity—mercy not sacrifice. The only acceptable sacrifice, the reasonable service, must be praise and thanksgiving, rising to heaven through the gratitude of the widow's heart, through the hungry soul now satisfied with bread, through the open gates of the prison which have become the gates of praise.

While couched in terms descriptive of tangible things, the realities—like all realities—are spiritual. It is scarcely necessary to remind the popular reader that a spiritual fact can be expressed only by the use of material imagery.

But strangely contrasting with the impressive circumstances of the promulgation of the law is the description of the setting up of the throne of His glory by the Son of man. We have no

mountain that may be touched ; no tempest, or fire, or smoke. Perhaps the essential spirituality of Moses' law was *suggested* by the withdrawal of Moses from the sight of the people at its institution, for in the midst of the remarkable sights and sounds which accompanied the giving of the law, Moses was not to be *seen*.

A similar hint of the spirituality of God and of man's highest relation was given to the high priest who entered into the holy of holies of the temple once a year. It was supposed that behind the veil a special manifestation of the divine presence was reserved. When the Roman army entered the holy city, and got into the temple, Titus boldly and profanely approached the holy of holies, drew the veil aside and entered. There was no object to arrest the eye, or on which it could repose ; there was nothing the hand of man could touch ; there was no voice of words, or thunder appealing to the ear. There was nothing. Could the fact that God is a spirit, and that they who worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth, be more impressively suggested ? And might not the entering into the holy of holies by

the high priest, at intervals so wide apart, also suggest that we have to do with a Being who inhabiteth eternity?

Certain is it, that what there is of material fact belongs to the close of the dispensation about to pass away, not to the age or state of things about to supersede it.

There is but one true and abiding law for Jew and Gentile. Not as *Jews* was the nation into which the Son of man was born, now about to stand before His judgment seat, with all the other nations of the earth. Nationality has become extinct before the great white throne. And He who sits on that unsullied throne declares Himself not as Jesus, the Jew, but as the all-related Son of man. Here all the peoples are gathered to be judged—not by our law or by their law, but stripped of all national, hereditary and earthly distinctions, standing only in their proper and essential humanity, in the presence of the Son of man, they are judged, one and all, by the law of the Son of man. Kings of the earth have cast down their crowns before Him, and are here not as kings but as men, with all their subjects, equal

before the law of the King of kings. Before the throne of the Son of man priests and Levites stand stripped of their official distinctions, and simply take their place with publicans and sinners as equally amenable to the claims of the far-reaching law of the kingdom. The judge is the *Son of man*—our Lord's designation of Himself. And what more appropriate appellation than this for Him who sits upon the throne?

When the Son of man should sit upon the throne of His glory, may be discovered by a reference to Paul's allusion to it at Athens.¹ In that discourse he takes a glimpse at the past ages and dispensations, and he says: *The times of this ignorance God winked at, but now he declareth to men that they should all everywhere repent: inasmuch as he hath appointed a day in the which he will judge* THE INHABITED EARTH *in righteousness in a man whom he hath ordained, whereof, etc.* (Acts xvii. 23-31). This "day" evidently denotes a period or age, as compared with the "times" gone by. Speaking as a Jew, one of a nation who believed they had been specially legislated for,

¹ He is now speaking to Gentiles.

and judged, he says that all the world will now be judged by Jesus.

The subject of the picture is an *unfolding of the problem of Humanity*. Who more capable of solving that problem than the Son of man—the man in whom the ideal and the actual are one?

II

THE UNIVERSAL JURISDICTION

“And before Him shall be gathered all nations.”

INTERNATIONAL Law and Extradition Treaties provide for the trial of alleged offenders according to the recognised customs and codes of friendly nations. A condemnation before one national tribunal may be an acquittal before another, according as codes differ from one another in their legal enactments: or the penalty for an offence of which two different states take cognisance may be different in one state from what it is in another. “Hast thou appealed unto Cæsar? unto Cæsar shalt thou go,” said Festus to Paul. “By our law,” clamoured the Jews to Pilate, “He (Jesus) ought to die.” The administration of law, also, in a highly civilised country like ours, allows of appeal from a lower to a higher court; and a

verdict given in one court may be reversed in another, and be reaffirmed in yet another.

But the tribunal of the Son of man admits of no international relation, and it cannot take account of any international or extradition treaty. It recognises no superior court. There can be no higher or juster legislation.

Much less can there be any delegation of the supreme authority to any national or ecclesiastical jurisdiction. No earthly potentate has the power to abrogate its enactments, or to add to them, or to enforce any claims in its name. No Solon or Justinian would venture to dispute their wisdom. Nor can any ecclesiastical hierarchy assume the prerogative of the Son of man in the judgment without incurring the charge of the most daring and treasonable presumption. "We must all stand before the judgment seat of Christ,"—we apostles, who have till now been standing before Moses' judgment seat,—saints, bishops, priests, and deacons,—we Christians as well as Jews and heathen. And from heaven's high court of justice there is no appeal. In this sense the popular phrase, "the final judgment," is strictly true.

The scribes and Pharisees had often been shocked and moved to resentment by the representations Jesus had made of His claims and of His kingdom. To them and their followers such disclosures as those now made to the disciples would come as a startling revelation. Moses, in whom they trusted, was to be abolished. What could shock them more than this? It meant that all they had held most sacred was to be desecrated and to become obsolete. What profanity! what blasphemy! Still more shocking must have been the thought that this young Nazarene, "the carpenter's son," was to take the place of Moses.

And then, the little bits of "privilege," so sweet to proud and selfish human nature, were to be taken from them. Favouritism and special providence over Israel, were to come to an end: to say nothing of all the little pickings to be got out of the system by priests, scribes, and pharisees. Tithes and all the other good things that these rich men enjoyed were incidental, and fell to the lot of the few. But to the judgment seat of Christ every man in Israel was about to be summoned; his position before God, and his religious position

among the nations being radically affected at the same time. Who, then, can wonder at the nation rallying to the cry, "Away with Him! crucify Him"?

Disestablishment, to some good churchmen, means the deluge. But when the revelations our Lord was now making to His disciples should reach the ears of the scribes and Pharisees, we can imagine their amazement and wrath! And we must think of something far more sweeping than disestablishment; the proper parallel would be the extinction of Christianity itself—a very different thing!

And yet—has there ever been an opponent of Christianity who has ventured to declare that the law of the kingdom is not holy, just, and good? or has any atheist ever expressed a wish to have it blotted out of the world's great statute-book? Has any legislative body ever dreamt of repealing it, or debated the question that it wants amending?

Its provisions are "twice blessed: blessing him that gives, and him that takes;" and the more its benign enactments are examined, the clearer does it become that this law is just and perfectly

adapted to regulate the conduct of mankind everywhere and through all ages. And, therefore, the multitude of nations on the face of the earth—past, present, and future—stand before Christ's judgment seat.

This announcement by the Christ must have struck even the disciples in a manner we can scarcely realise. What? Moses no more? The law read every day in the synagogue superseded? From the throne of His glory He says: "I will have mercy, and not sacrifice;" and the temple service is swept away, and the blood of bulls and of goats is to be shed no more. The Roman occupation of Jerusalem was bad enough, but Cæsar was more indulgent than the Son of man. Judaism was tolerated. But the Christ sweeps away the entire system.

Even so. Before Him shall be gathered all the peoples—Jews as well as heathen. All nations, on the ground of their common humanity; "for He hath made of one blood all nations that dwell upon the face of the earth."

The forms of Judaism were, doubtless, symbols of divine light and energy. But they were also

so many richly-wrought curtains shutting in the Israelites to partial and narrow conceptions of God, sometimes obscuring, by their many folds and their oppressive sensuousness, the spirituality and tenderness of the divine glory.

If special national privileges accrued to Israel under the law, it is not less noticeable that its ritual, its restrictions, limitations, prohibitions, penalties, its rigorous observances, "which neither we nor our forefathers were able to bear," constituted a serious bondage—a painful servitude. Christianity was to set the whole nation *free*. They were imprisoned: Christ redeemed them from their bondage. They were shut up to the faith. Their fall was the riches of the world; but their gain in Christ was infinitely more than their loss in Moses; "for if their fall was the riches of the world, how much more their fulness!"

To adopt a still stronger, yet equally scriptural metaphor, the nation may be said to have been *buried* under this mass of religious rites and ceremonies. The *grave* is actually used by the prophets, and by Jesus Himself, to express this very idea. And in answer to the question, "Who shall

roll us away the stone from this sepulchre?" we hear Jesus announcing Himself as the resurrection and the life. And we find St. Paul, especially in his Epistle to the Galatians, following Jesus, under similar imagery, in proclaiming and enforcing this doctrine.

Although, in relation to the Jews, the supersession of Moses' judgment seat by the judgment seat of Christ is the fact noted in the Gospels, the judgment seat of Christ was not now for the first time about to be set up. From the beginning of time it was the tribunal before which all human life and action stood justified or condemned. "But of the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever; and the sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom" (Heb. i. 8). *Before Abraham* (or Moses) *was, I am* (John viii. 58).

III

CLASSIFICATION

“And He shall separate them as a shepherd divideth the sheep
from the goats.”

BENEATH the complex conditions of family, social, church, and national life, each presenting to the eye a tolerably homogeneous surface of its own, there are forces at work which ever tend to disruption and division, not necessarily inimical to wellbeing; often, on the contrary, absolutely essential to the course of human progress. It seems desirable as well as inevitable that the centrifugal force as a rule should acquire an ascendancy over the centripetal. Antagonism and disintegration must precede new combinations, and new combinations and developments are the indications of life and progress. This is illustrated in the mission of our Lord in relation to Judaism.

We have here to do only with humanity in its *spiritual* aspects, and to observe the phenomena of spiritual being. And we see segregation as well as aggregation ever going on. Naturally, and without resorting to the idea of any outward force to explain it, mankind are being divided into two distinct sections. The cleavage of the great block of humanity is not mechanical. The spiritual laws of cohesion, of attraction and repulsion, may not be dreamed of by the careless, but not more certain and potent are chemical laws in relation to matter than those which are unresistingly and subtly moulding character and forming the broad, moral divisions of society.

“Two women shall be grinding at the mill,” as like to the eye as can be in dress, in training, in habits, in purpose, and apparent destiny ; but in spiritual affinity as different from one another as the fine wheat from the nether stone which is grinding it to powder. The one is found at the Judge's right hand, the other at the left.

The purpose of life—what is it? God puts it thus : the individual is to live for the mass. The

devil, on the contrary, puts it thus: the mass exists for the individual.

“Why, then, the world’s mine oyster,
Which I with sword will open.”¹

A perfectly independent man—isolated, self-contained, unrelated, is simply a monster, and yet, how strange! to become such a monstrosity men are everywhere rushing on, straining every nerve, leaving no stone unturned. “Are they not of the body”? and if they are, why fight against a divine law? Propose to such an individual the *service of man* as the only worthy object of his life’s ambition, and he sets you down as a fool.

Even such a man will be mean enough to avail himself of any social advantages within reach, that he might lay them under contribution to promote his selfish ambition. The artificial combinations of social life would be very amusing if they were not so intensely sad. Social links often glitter with cruellest fetters of gold. What grovelling self-worship is there in the amassing of money, and in the surrounding oneself with luxuries and elegancies of wealth within the high walls of self-

¹ *Merry Wives of Windsor*, Act ii. Scene 2.

complacent exclusiveness. These are the fascinating byways of life that meet the eye continually and that look so very inviting, but are so forbidding and cold: for hearts are hardening, and until they be *broken* they will be found among those "who did it not."

And there is no getting to the right hand of the Judge by hanging on to the skirts of goodness, or by trying to crowd in with the happy throng of "the blessed."

The inhabitants of Palestine were a pastoral people. From the patriarchs onward the shepherd and the flock symbolised the occupation of their sons, and their wealth was reckoned in the number of sheep which they possessed.

In her instructive lectures, Miss Finkelstein has vividly described the pastoral life of the Holy Land, and she tells us she has often seen the shepherd leading forth his flock to the green pastures in the morning, when the goats go first after the shepherd in the procession, and the sheep follow after. On returning in the evening, however, we are told, lest the goats should worry the sheep, they are most carefully separated and folded apart.

It is the introduction of this simple and picturesque analogue of fact in pastoral life that has led some to call this remarkable picture a parable. But if the discourse be read carefully, from beginning to end, it will grow very clear that the scene is far more dramatic than parabolic, and that it is a picture which appeals strongly to the imagination, and not a parable which addresses itself rather to the rational perception by its more or less ingenious and striking parallelism. The parables of our Lord are often announced as parables, and many of them are introduced to us with the preliminary: "the kingdom of heaven is like." We have nothing of the sort here. The parables preceding this grand utterance of our Lord, as well as the general tenor of the discourses in Matthew xxiii.-xxv., all lead up to this overwhelmingly magnificent picture of human life and destiny. It is without parallel, and we may indeed adopt the language of the disciples when they said, "Now speakest Thou plainly, and speakest no proverb."

The discrimination of the Judge inevitably leads to separation. There is but one law, though the acts in which it may be embodied are multi-

tudinous and varied. There must of necessity, therefore, be but two classes into which the great mass of human beings can be divided. And into one or other of these great bodies all are entering—each being continually augmented in numbers through successive generations.

After disposing of mankind on his right and on his left hand, under the figure of sheep and goats, the figure is dropped: we lose sight of the pastoral imagery, and each company is addressed, and each responds, as human beings, and not as sheep and goats.¹

The *principle* on which the classification is based will be discussed further on.

¹ Our Lord would be as familiar as any of His hearers with the imagery of Ezek. xxxiv. 17: "And as for you, O my flock, thus saith the Lord God: Behold, I judge between cattle and cattle, between the rams and the he-goats."

IV

THE LAW OF THE SON OF MAN

“Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and thy neighbour as thyself.”

IN these few words the complete divine law is epitomised. Does any one ask for heaven's “statutes at large”? Jesus wrote them out in the full volume of His perfect life. “The Lord spoke unto Moses,” but unto us He speaks by His Son. Currency was sought to be given to spurious laws, and treacherous treasonable attempts were put forth to make void the divine law by Jewish tradition.

There surely must be something about the law of the Son of man which is not quite agreeable to the human mind, or why should His contemporaries busy themselves so mightily about *their* law? And why should men in all times and countries be so ready to ignore *this*? Well, perhaps it is

less easy to measure or weigh or price divine goodness than it is to estimate the grievous burdens laid upon the shoulders of the people by their religious rulers. Long prayers might be measured as well as long faces. Tithes could be computed to a fraction. A bull or a goat or a pair of pigeons could be valued at so much apiece. Broad phylacteries go for something. But, *Come unto me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden*, says Jesus, *and I will give you rest*. His demands are not exacting. And when we come to inquire for His yoke and His burden, does His yoke chafe us? does His burden stagger us? We are only surprised to find that the yoke is so easy, and that the burden is so light.

One can hardly realise it. It seems so unlike anything that passes among men as *law*—this law of kindness. Yet to the Jews it should not have come as an altogether strange thing. For upon what hang all the Law and the Prophets?

1. It is a law of *socialism*, not of isolated individualism. It is only within the social sphere that its requirements can be carried out. A withdrawal from human society could not be more emphatically

prohibited. It condemns the man who has no brother. The obligations of the law of the Son of man are violated by the neglect of others' needs.

It is Christ's law. It is man's law—the true law of his essential being. It is not as if the judgment ran upon lines outside the fundamental attributes of man's nature. Nor is it a law arbitrarily imposed by a victorious enemy over a conquered race ; nor capriciously over an oppressed people by an imperial tyrant. Its provisions are not humiliating and degrading like those of many a law enforced upon a downtrodden people under a foreign yoke. It exacts no tax upon light : nay, it is a kingdom of light, and its children are the children of the day. It imposes no restraint upon human freedom ; nay, its spirit and its aim is emancipation. Yet men have talked as if God would bring them under the arbitrary law of a foreign potentate, when as a loving Father only He is eagerly looking after the order and happiness of His own family ! And yet the feeling of many a heart towards the most real friend we ever had, or can have, has been : *We will not have this man to reign over us.*

Not only was the law as administered by the Son of man exemplified in His own earthly career, and embodied in His everyday work of love and beneficence, but it is evidently the practical fact which is absolutely *wanted* to justify the position of supremacy He assumes as Judge. What is the commendation He gives to those on His right hand but an echo of His voice in the synagogue? *The spirit of the Lord God is upon me ; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek ; he hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound ; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God ;*¹ *to comfort all that mourn, etc.* (Isa. lxi. 1-4).

The law which was exemplified in His divine and beautiful life, He now recognises as reproduced and fulfilled in the lives of those who have been imbued with His own good spirit, and who have actually followed Him in doing, with hearty goodwill, His works of beneficence and mercy. Such

¹ Was there an intentional omission of "the day of vengeance of our God" when our Lord read this quotation from the Prophet? See Luke iv. 18, 19.

workers have been heard to exclaim, *Lord, what love have I unto Thy law !*

2. *It is a practical law of action*—a religion with its appropriate ritual.

One can hardly think of the word “religion” without a consciously diminished capacity to appreciate the kingdom of the Son of man. We do not object to the word, but we are struck with the fact that it has acquired a very narrow and conventional use.

Religion seems to turn into stone, as we see it petrified in the Cathedral, whose fine architectural proportions embody the grandest conceptions of *form*, and whose richly-coloured windows make the light of the Church such a strangely different thing from *the light of the world !*

All nations, heathen as well as Christian, have their holy places: their groves and their altars, all dedicated to the more or less unknown God. Temples, mosques, synagogues, shrines, chapels, meeting-houses, halls, and “rooms”—all bespeak and express the religious idea. Religion has its abbeys, its foundations, its charities. It expresses itself in purple and fine linen,—in priests, in sur-

pliced choirs, in church decorations, fasts, festivals, sabbaths, new moons, and saints' days.

It is personified in the hierarchical orders—in brotherhoods and sisterhoods. It enfolds itself in the robe of a doctor of divinity. It sits in theological tribunals, in consistories, convocations, presbyteries, œcumenical councils, and little church-meetings. Religion is exalted in a cardinal's hat, and stoops to wash the feet of pilgrims *once a year* ! It makes broad its phylacteries in the humble Pharisee, and those who enlarge the borders of their garments do it homage. It selects the chief places at feasts and takes the chief seats in the synagogues. It tithes mint and anise and cummin, but what it does with the weightier matters of the law is another matter (see Matt. xxiii., *passim*).

Religion fortifies itself in all kinds of infallibilities, from that of the Pope down to that of the smallest Plymouth brother ; and its creeds, confessions, and catechisms are so many testimonials to its respectability and capacity for stirring up strife.

It frowns and it growls in anathemas, excom-

munications, comminations, denunciations, depositions, exclusions, and pious boycottings ; and has even been known to unsheathe the sword in defence of its honour and the enforcement of its demands.

Religion *must* have its ritual. It is active in Church work, adorning its altar with crucifix or cross, and candles : is often very punctilious about its wardrobe : grows positively mirthful with good vocal and instrumental music ; and for its "services" and sacraments it demands the utmost possible reverence. And all this is done in a very devout and commendable spirit.

How much of all this will count before the great white throne we cannot calculate. Much as Christian fellowship and Christian worship are to be esteemed, we are persuaded that all this and much more will be unavailing in determining the position of men at the right hand or the left of the throne of the Son of man.

But the law of the kingdom not only allows but enjoins a ritual, and we see what that ritual is in the impressive scene we are endeavouring to realise in these pages.

The ritual of our divine Lord and Saviour is

wonderfully simple, beneficent, and practical. We have it formulated by the apostle James (i. 27), though not quite so fully illustrated as in our Lord's discourse.

Pure religion, or ritual (Θρησκεία), and undefiled before our God and Father is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction and¹ to keep himself unspotted from the world.

In his epistles, St. John offers striking corroboration of St. James and St. James' teacher, on this particular subject.

True, the ritual of Christianity may be adopted from inferior or unworthy motives, as any ritual may be. But the ritual is not arbitrarily imposed. It is not one of many possible rituals. Nothing can be used as a substitute for it; nor are its richness, sweetness, and profitableness augmented by such accessories as usually pass muster among religious people as articles of religion, such as clerical vestments or parochial uniforms. *Human*

¹ "*And*" is in italic, and is therefore not in the original. Omit it, and then, what? Does it not suggest that the very means by which the soul shall be kept unspotted from the world is the active observance of our Lord's ritual? The ways of grace become the means of grace also.

necessity, which is the plaintive voice of the Son of man, prescribes and demands the appropriate rite. If any ask bread, give bread, not a stone. And the doing of such kindly acts is the real performance of divine service ; for the service of man is the service of God.

As "the use" of this ritual is of universal obligation, the opportunity for its performance is never wanting. "The poor ye have always with you." The brethren of Christ—these brethren in suffering and want—are ever at our doors. Nor need any delay take place because "the elements" await consecration. The act of consecration over a loaf of bread given to a hungry man has been performed in the heart of the cheerful giver whom God loves. The giving of a cup of cold water in the name of a disciple is a priestly act ; and every Christian is ordained of God for such faithful service.

Sentence could never be pronounced in any case where opportunity had not afforded occasion for the exercise of these divine functions. But there are only *two* companies into which the human family are divided, "The one on the right hand, and the other on the left." And the appeal,

“Lord, when saw we Thee? . . .” as an excuse, is utterly vain. All are gathered before Him, because the criterion can and must be applied to all. In some form or other, all have the ability and opportunity of entering upon this divine service.

The law of the Son of man is characterised by special provisions, and what those provisions are we discern in the picture before us. If it were a law for a perfect and a sinless world—a world in which suffering is unknown, its merciful enactments would be nugatory : they would, indeed, be unintelligible. Because it is the law of the Son of man, it touches our humanity, our humanity *as it is*, at all points. It takes cognisance of physical hunger and thirst, and invests with the highest importance the prime necessities of our nature, both physical and moral. To limit the range of its benevolent intentions to the relief of merely physical suffering, however, is to take much too narrow a view of its scope. How did our Lord Himself illustrate it? He healed the sick, it is true ; He fed the hungry, it is true. But we still hear His inviting voice saying, “If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink.”

We see Him breaking the bread of life to the hungry soul as we hear Him declare, "I am that bread of life." And we have not forgotten His preaching deliverance to the captive, as we hear Him saying, "If the Son make you free, ye shall be free indeed." "The commandment is exceeding broad," and it meets every condition of want and suffering and sorrow.

When we say that no higher or better law could be adopted for social government than that which constitutes the ultimate ground of adjudication in character and conduct, by our Saviour and Judge, we mean that the *principle* on which the law of beneficence rests, is the principle upon which even the State, in its completest development, will be found to be built. For that principle must surely be the subordination of the individual to the wellbeing of the community, whether the community be considered in its smaller social aggregation—the family ; or in its larger aggregation—the State. The principle of mutual service will apply with equal force to both.

The taking of special care of the unfortunate,—the feeble, the sick, the necessitous, implies a

general regard for the rights, the liberties, the health, and happiness of the more fortunate, and, it may be, the more prudent members of the community. If it be a duty to heal the sick, it is not less a duty to preserve the health of the city. We need not wait till a man is literally starving before we open the stores of our hospitality. Jesus does not forbid our claiming our brother's freedom till he is actually bound in irons. The helping a man to stand fast in the liberty he enjoys cannot go unrecognised, and such a helper will by no means lose his reward. Nor, if it be incumbent on every one of us to feed the hungry and clothe the naked, are we forbidden to be discriminating and methodical. And it is not less our duty to see that none are deprived of their means of subsistence or their clothing or of their rightful opportunity of self-maintenance. In other words, it is incumbent upon us, as far as our power and influence extend, to see that our neighbour enjoys the fullest liberty and security in the working out of his own social destiny. Those who object to this great principle of Christian law, do but unveil the idol of their hearts—*self*.

V

THE SANCTIONS OF THE LAW OF THE SON OF MAN

“Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. . . Depart from me, under a curse, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.”

THE laws of earthly states are sanctioned and enforced by penalties. By no absolute standard of right and wrong is their severity or mildness determined ; and, as a matter of fact, we find the same offence visited in different kingdoms by different punishments.

The law of heaven's spiritual kingdom differs essentially from all human laws in two respects.

I. It is a law which demands a state of mind in intimate spiritual affinity with the Son of man, to be manifested in *positive action*. It says, “Thou shalt,” while human laws say, “Thou

shalt not." "This do," says the Son of man from the throne of His glory "and thou shalt be recompensed." "Dare to do this or that," says man-made law, "and thou shalt suffer."

2. The sanctions of human laws are arbitrary in their inception, and their penalties fall upon the transgressor only through his property, or his relationships in life, or his physical freedom. By an expensive and complicated machinery are their sentences enforced; courts and prisons and the numerous grades of officials, who put the apparatus of the law in motion, are indispensable.

But the "law of the Lord is perfect," and therefore arbitrariness cannot be predicated of it; nor can its divine sanctions admit of variety or alternative. Those whose lives are conformed to it can, by no possibility, miss their reward. Its application requires no external executive machinery. Its wonderful breadth and simplicity consists in the fact that it is *automatic* in its action. Its blessedness is evolutionary, as the flower and fruit are developments from the seed.

Let us see how far the *process* of the judgment confirms our statement of the question.

1. We have a welcome : *Come, ye blessed of my Father.*

The life modelled on the law of the Son of man is a blessed life. *Come*—for there is sweetest harmony between your life and the love of the Father, *my Father and your Father.* How exquisitely beautiful the Fatherhood of God, as it is more than suggested here ! Has not the Father been at work in our world ? Has it ever been left in orphanage ? Would He not have all His children like Him ? We *have* one Father, and all we are brethren.

Again. Like attracts like. The welcome is an expression of the law of affinity. *Come, ye blessed of my Father*—blessed with His yearning heart ; blessed with His generous purposes ; blessed with His open hand.

The Son of man has Himself received the approving recognition of the Father. His self-sacrificing service of man has enthroned Him, and gives a wonderful naturalness and grace to the words of welcome that proceed from His lips.

2. We have an inheritance. *Inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.*

Deeds of mercy, sympathy, and helpfulness are by no means a merely giving out. They are both regal and reproductive. What you have done to the least of these, my brethren, are the *title-deeds* of the inheritance. These beneficent actions are the guarantees of ruling power. In seeking the good of others self has been restrained, and thus a host of foes has been subdued. The inheritance is won. It is a present possession. Its security and perpetuity are guaranteed. Where is the enemy that can dispossess the owner? Who can dispute the claim? The enemy? he has no idea where and what the kingdom is, or where to look for the possession. It is not geographical; it is not hereditary. It partakes of none of the elements out of which the kingdoms of this world are constituted or maintained. Its impenetrable fortifications defy all human armaments, for no weapon formed against it can prosper. No thieves can break through and steal. But of its increase there can be no end, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. To worldly-minded Christians? to those who are looking for a material *quid pro quo*, perhaps to a reversion in

another world, the inheritance may seem a little too shadowy. They may even be surprised to discover that it is nothing more nor less than what our Lord said it should be,—*a kingdom within you*—and an inheritance which its happy possessor is well content to enjoy. *Give, and it shall be given you ; full measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over, shall they give into your bosom. For with what measure ye mete it shall be measured to you again* (Luke vi. 38).

Shadowy? Who can be richer than he who wants no good thing? Do not what men *call* riches take to themselves wings and fly away? or do they not find they will never buy what they most want? Is fame more than a bubble? Was there ever an earthly kingdom that could not be moved?

But those who hear the welcome receive an immovable kingdom because its righteousness is coeval with the foundation of the world. It is the kingdom of the everlasting Father, built upon undeviating rectitude and unchanging love.

Can a greater reward be conceived by the Christian mind than conformity to the image of the Son? Like Him in ministry, like Him in

reward. Like Him in His humiliation, like Him in His glory. Thus following their Lord in the philanthropical labour of His life on earth, they *sit with Him on His throne*. The ministry has become the glory. The fellowship of the suffering is not only the pledge but the very germ of the joy of resurrection. The adjudication runs along the line of cause and effect. This is affirmed in the very terms of the award. The inheritance is not something superadded, but it is evolved out of the loving service of man.

The tendency in the human mind to connect work with wages is inveterate. This tendency is not ignored by Scripture writers; it has sometimes been employed by them to illustrate their teaching. It is subtly expressed by Satan in his insinuated aspersion of Job's integrity? *Will a man serve God for naught?* To induce a rogue to do an honest action, we offer a reward! And of any good course proposed to us, we ask, "Will it pay?" And yet the moment such a question is seen as what it is, a mere *quid pro quo*, how an act of generosity loses all its beauty and delight! How sullied the hand! Such a reward is the

wand of disenchantment, and the pleasure turns to disgust. If in the sense of wages earned the blessed were welcomed, the sweetness of the welcome would be turned to bitterness, and the throne of glory would be degraded into the counting-house and pay-office of a calculating man of business !

An artist invited his friends to inspect his painting. They came. When the spectators were ready for the exhibition they entered a gallery. Here, at one end of it, they saw a curtain, beautiful in its rich colours and graceful folds. After gazing awhile, expecting the curtain to be drawn aside, they turned inquiringly to the artist. He greatly astonished them when he said to them, "the curtain is the picture." Thus, sordid minds fail to see the beauty and grace of generous deeds. They take them for a curtain behind which something is concealed. But they *are* the picture ; and they are the joy of loving hearts. Done in His spirit, a deed of mercy is the entertainment of the Divine Guest Himself. Would any one who has it, part with this reward for silver and gold ? It is the very crown of life. The Christ identifies Himself with the hungry, the thirsty, the

sick, the captive: the service rendered to these is really the service of the loving Saviour. It is this service that places these practical philanthropists at the Judge's right hand. *Come, ye blessed* is the outward form only—the symbol—in which the fact is presented to our poor apprehension. *Inherit the kingdom* is breathed in the gratitude of relieved suffering: the heavenly music swells into the grandest harmony with the breaking chains of the liberated slave. Heaven's warm welcome is babbled in the living stream of sympathy, as in the form of a cup of cold water it is lifted to the parched lips of the weary pilgrim traversing the dry and thirsty land of this earthly life. *Inherit the kingdom* are the words which are wrought into the texture of the garments given in compassion to the naked, and which any loving Dorcas may clearly discern.

There is something which specially arrests our attention in the place assigned by Jesus to John the Baptist in relation to the kingdom of heaven. We remember the pre-eminence Jesus claims for John. He describes his forerunner as much more than a prophet, and He adds, "Verily, I say unto

you, among them that are born of women there hath not arisen a greater than John the Baptist." And then follows this remarkable antithesis : *Yet he that is lesser in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.*

Now what is it in these humblest souls in the kingdom of heaven that discovers to us a superiority to John the Baptist? In personal character John was not a wind-shaken reed, or effeminate and luxurious. Quite the reverse. He was stern, severe, Spartan. He preached repentance. He rather cleared the ground than planted it. He prepared the way of the Lord.

John was in prison. The answer which Jesus sent by John's disciples to the Baptist supplies a helpful hint ; for the message tells of the *works of beneficence* which Jesus had wrought. And beneficence is a great advance on repentance. In the ways of righteousness repentance is a very early and rudimentary step. It is but the porch to the temple—the entry to a life which culminates in *compassion*, and which is crowned by self-sacrifice for the good of others. In the light which, from the judgment-throne is shed upon the "cup of cold water," we behold the true holy grail.

VI

THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF THE SON OF MAN

“Then shall the righteous answer Him . . . but the righteous
into life eternal.”

IF it were possible to obliterate this description of the final judgment from the memory of Catholic Christendom, and from all the other “orthodox” Christian communities of the world, would any of them be satisfied with a theologian who should use the term *righteous* as it is used in this discourse?

What is the evidence, it would be asked, that the appellation given from the throne of glory is appropriate? Can the doing of certain benevolent actions become an adequate qualification for the name? And it would be quickly pointed out by most of them, that of a baptism which washes away original sin, there was no certificate de-

manded : no evidence given that the catechism had been learned : no proof that confirmation had been gone through, or that a first communion had been participated in. Others would demur, because there was no evidence that these "righteous" ones had ever heard the Gospel, much less believed in it—or been "washed in the blood," or "found peace," or gone through any of the prescribed religious experiences which are deemed necessary as stepping-stones to the platform of "imputed righteousness." Where are the wise, where are the scribes who would admit that this use of the term "righteous" was not seriously lax or misleading? The Fathers, where are *they*?

So much is involved in the use of this one little word in this extremely interesting connection, that we shall hardly be chargeable with the sin of diffuseness, if we devote an entire section to its discussion.

None will question the solemnity and deliberateness of this scene of judicial impartiality in which this designation is twice used, or dispute the extreme carefulness with which our Lord drew it in all its graphic details. Those on the right

hand are *the righteous*. We take our stand by the judgment throne, and we hear them welcomed as the righteous. That is enough.

Now, we know that the great Teacher and Searcher of hearts was ever correcting erroneous ideas about righteousness. As Philosophy was enthroned by the Greeks, so Righteousness was the end and spirit of the legislation of Moses. Never was the fundamental idea of righteousness lost by this people. To be esteemed righteous was the highest distinction sought or attained. In going about to establish their own righteousness, they sought the gratification of their ambition and the applause of the ignorant throng. *But*, said our Lord, *except your righteousness exceed the righteousness of the scribes and pharisees, ye cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven*. And again: *Not every one that saith unto me, "Lord, Lord," shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father in heaven*.

The righteous have fed the hungry ; they have clothed the naked ; they have visited the sick ; they have liberated the captive. Thus have they done the will of the Father. They are welcomed to the

kingdom of heaven. There is no other place for them: they could be at home nowhere else. Their righteousness may not have given them access to the uppermost seats in the synagogue; they may be conspicuous by their absence from the corners of the streets and at the greetings in the market-place. They may not have been baptized, or confirmed, or gone to confession. They may not have received any sacrament whatever. It may be that they have not signed thirty-nine articles, or even have read them. It may be that their memory is too short for the length of the Athanasian Creed, or that they have not head enough to understand it. They may be totally ignorant of the Catechism of the Assembly of Divines at Westminster, and they may never have been pronounced "sound" by their erring fellow-mortals. It is quite possible that John Calvin would say, as he stood upon the pedestal of his *Institutes*, "I never knew you." It may be that they never read good John Wesley's *Sermons*, or that they might not pass muster at Class-meeting, or be eligible for breaking bread with the Brethren—though it is quite possible they

might pass creditably through any or all of these gates of righteousness, *and yet be among the righteous.*

It is time that a resolute stand be made against confusing this very simple matter with theological tenets and controversies. If the theologians have not yet quite squared their theories with the facts of our Lord's teaching, let them set themselves to the task without further delay. *He* cannot be expected to abate a jot or tittle to "meet their views." In the meantime let all who earnestly wish to know what our Lord's teaching was, and to understand it, in order that they may do the Father's will, accept with extreme caution any who say they come to them with "Catholic doctrine."

To the Voice from the judgment-seat we get an echo in the words of the Apostle John: *He that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous* (1 John iii. 7).

Can any one be so foolish as to infer from this ministering to human necessity, that the functionary called "the relieving officer" would *therefore* stand well in the judgment? There is no

righteousness in mere perfunctoriness, whether that of the relieving officer or other. Can any one be so childish or so mercenary as to suppose that deeds of mercy are to be counted and cast up as so much *merit*? There is no divine righteousness in the performance of a distasteful or unwelcome task. A life that is one continuous expenditure for the good of others cannot be brought under any arithmetical rule.

The righteousness of the righteous is all of grace—of gracious spirit, in graceful act. *The spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach good tidings to the poor*, etc. (Luke iv. 18). This grace of goodness is the anointing oil. *And as for you, the anointing which ye received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any one teach you; but as his anointing teacheth you concerning all things, and is true, and is no lie, and even as it taught you, ye abide in him. . . . If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one also that doeth righteousness is begotten of him* (1 John ii. 27-29).

The righteousness of the righteous is not a marketable commodity to be weighed in scales or

measured in a bushel ; it cannot be computed by any arithmetical calculus, nor can its fruits be represented by any money value. Looked at in this way, our righteousnesses are just as much "filthy rags" as are the beads and paternosters of the poor unenlightened Romanist. Equally impossible is it that, by some legal fiction, or pious *hocus-pocus*, there can be an exchange by which A takes B's righteousness and B takes A's delinquencies. There is no passing of an unrighteous man in the judgment because he puts on the clothes of a righteous man.

One of our Lord's parables is specially addressed to *certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous* (Luke xviii. 9). This was the parable of the abashed and penitent publican and the boasting pharisee, who thought that he had made an eloquent and impressive recital of his meritorious deeds.

In striking contrast with the self-complacency of the pharisee is the conduct of the righteous in this picture, who, in no mock humility or sham modesty, but in sheer ignorance of the fact till the king woke them up to it, asked : *Lord, when saw*

we thee hungry or thirsty? This is the glowing loveliness of divine virtue: it does not see itself. It is the exquisite bloom on the ripe plum. It is the absence of self-consciousness which, in the little child, calls forth our loving admiration. The righteousness which measures and admires its own excellences will be as disappointed as was Narcissus, who, falling in love with his own image in the water, was turned into a daffodil.

There is not so much difficulty as some imagine in discerning genuine righteousness. How readily men detect an evil spirit in an evil action! A wrong is perpetrated, and it is forthwith attributed, as it should be, to a wrong spirit. Should there be any great difficulty in ascribing a good deed to a good heart? If a person be uniformly kind, should we be wide of the mark in saying, *The law of kindness is in his heart?* Why should we hesitate to ascribe the humane acts commended by the Son of man to the very spirit of Christ Himself? The spirit of the act is everything, while it is the act that manifests the spirit.

And it is the rich fulness of a glowing faith which recognises God in *all* goodness. His spirit

strives with and within all the children of men ; for the development of that life of love which expresses itself in acts of mercy and beneficence. He is not *less* but *more* of a believer who traces all human kindness to the great source of love. And can it be harder to believe that He who bathes in loveliness and beauty alike the stars of heaven and the flowers of the field, touches the broad fields of our humanity with the greater loveliness and beauty of His own spiritual breath ? This is *the light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world.*

From the lips of the Supreme authority we learn who "the righteous" are. *He that doeth righteousness is righteous,—that righteousness* whose source is God, whose essence is love, and whose expression is active philanthropy. From the Son of man, for us Christians, there is no appeal.

"But faith in God is righteousness," a devout reader of St. Paul's Epistles may be ready to exclaim. Assuredly. And in this there is no contradiction to what has already been characterised as righteousness. All sweet character and good action are the outcome of faith in God,

according to the light possessed. The clearer the perception of God, the stronger the faith, and the firmer the step in the ways of goodness and mercy. Faith in a God whose approval was not given to works of beneficence, would never save a soul, nor could it be counted for righteousness ; for righteousness would never be the product of such a faith. The truth of God's being and power is attested by the goodness which characterises the righteous ; for it is the manifestation of God's spirit.

The vicious, the cruel, the selfish are not and cannot be believers in God, because vice and cruelty and selfishness represent nothing that is to be found in the divine nature.

Abraham believed in God and it was counted to him for righteousness, not instead of righteousness, but as the fountain of righteousness, whence all the love and goodness expressed in his life flowed.

The Jews of New Testament times were thoroughly imbued with the notion that righteousness came out of the observance of the ceremonial law. How then could they possibly attain to the righteousness of God, whose love appealed to human affection, whose loveliness should be mani-

fested in human character, and whose righteousness could only be responded to by a life of self-abnegation for the good of others?

If in studying the character and life of "faithful Abraham," he turned out a man whose conduct excited no sympathy of goodness, no response of generous benevolence, no touch of tenderness and mercy, should we think his faith counted for much? Do we not visit with the most scathing scorn and contempt, in our own day, the man who professes to love God, and to follow the Christ, who is grasping, mean, and hard hearted?

But Abraham proved his faith by his works. We at once recall his personal piety in resisting the temptation to abjure his personal faith and worship for the idolatry and heathen practices of Chaldea. To the strangers Abraham offers water to drink and bread to eat: *A morsel of bread, and comfort ye your hearts* (Gen. xviii. 5-7). The little difficulty with Lot is overcome by Abraham's large-minded and generous conduct. His merciful character is manifested in his intercession on behalf of the cities of the Plain, and his sense of righteousness is expressed in the argument implied

in his pleading. The child of the bondwoman, equally with the son of promise, calls forth his yearning solicitude: *O that Ishmael might live before thee!*¹

The ascetics seem always to be striving after a righteousness which is super or extra mundane. The ample field of action in which Abraham sought to express his faith he found in his human relations; and in these he strikingly distinguished himself as "the friend of God." The incarnation actually brings God within the same sphere, and these works of mercy which attest Abraham's faith are the kind of works on which our Lord rests His ultimate claim to be believed: *Yet believe me for the work's sake.* When saw we Thee? *Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day; he saw it and was glad.*

It comes inevitably to this. God and man are one. Respect man, you worship God. Show kindness to the helpless, it is Godlike. My willing service of my fellow-man is my duty to God.

¹ Rabbi Emanuel, B.A. (Birmingham), tells us that the modern Jewish term for philanthropy, alms-giving, is "justice," "righteousness:" as in Matt. vi. 1., "Take heed that ye do not your *alms* before men,"—margin *righteousness*.

The ultimate obligation, indeed, is to God ; only secondarily and reflectively, and through human possibility, to man. The loving of God with all the heart, *must* carry with it the love of the neighbour. By becoming incarnate, God proves to demonstration that the service of man is the service of Himself.¹

“Abou Ben Adhem (may his tribe increase !)
Awoke one night from a deep dream of peace,
And saw, within the moonlight in his room, .
Making it rich, and like a lily in bloom,
An angel writing in a book of gold ;
Exceeding peace had made Ben Adhem bold,
And to the presence in the room he said,
‘What writest thou?’ The vision raised its head,
And with a look made all of sweet accord,
Answer’d, ‘The names of those who love the Lord.’
‘And is mine one?’ said Abou. ‘Nay, not so,’
Replied the angel. Abou spoke more low,
But cheerly still, and said, ‘I pray thee, then,
Write me as one who loves his fellow-men.’

The angel wrote and vanished. The next night
It came again with a great awakening light,
And show’d the names whom love of God had bless’d,
And lo ! Ben Adhem’s name led all the rest.”²

¹ The Writer of the *Service of Man* seems to have been unaware of this aspect of the religion of Jesus Christ.

² LEIGH HUNT.

Let us take another example from the Old Testament, far more slightly connected, apparently, with what is popularly associated with "Gospel" times. In the poem, called in our Bibles "the Book of Job," one of the questions raised is—how man can be just with God ; and this is the question which is clearly answered in the story of Job's life. Righteousness is the *motif* of the Poem. The character of this man,—the greatest of all the children of the East,—as affected by prosperity and adversity, especially as that character is developed and matured by suffering, is full of instruction, because it gives us a key to the mystery of our own sorrows and trials, and vindicates the goodness of God in the infliction of trouble. But our object here is limited to one particular aspect of Job's life, as it affords an illustration of the righteousness in which Job stands at the right hand of the Son of man.

So far as any evidence, external or internal, helps us, Job never heard of the promised Messiah. The details of the drama are not specially moulded by Jewish institutions, practices, or modes of expression.¹ Yet is the God and merciful Father of

¹ Sacrifice was common to both heathen and Jewish races.

us all recognised by Job and his friends. They were all "very religious."

Job is introduced to us as *a man that was perfect and upright, and one that feared God and eschewed evil*. Will his perfection and uprightness stand him in good stead in the judgment?

It would not be fair to form our final estimate of Job's character from his lamentations, his questionings, his despair, or the exasperations to which he was goaded by the reproaches of his pious friends; just as it would be quite impossible to form an estimate of the purity of fine gold while it is yet in the crucible. We have no difficulty in appreciating the *constant* as distinguished from the *variable* in human character: and keeping in view this principle, the character of Job, from first to last, is revealed as one of trustful devotion to God, of persistent righteousness and generosity of life.

As first introduced to us we learn that he was *a perfect and upright man*; and at the last the evidence is multiform and varied, that his trials had neither made him a sceptic nor a misanthrope, but that they had been the means of strengthening and deepening all the early goodness of his nature,

and purifying and enriching his spiritual faculty and life.

Now, according to the measure by which a man's righteousness is determined by the enthroned Son of man, was Job a righteous man? That is the question. Here is the evidence which is to supply the answer—Job's *life*; for we must get it from his life, nothing else.

One of Job's "miserable comforters," Eliphaz, asks: *Is it any pleasure to the Almighty that thou art righteous?* and, shallow man that he is, he goes on to argue that Job must have been a very bad man, because he suffered so dreadfully! And yet his charging his friend, Job, with unrighteousness discovers that he, too, had an ideal righteousness, as well as Job; an ideal certainly a great deal more like that of the Son of man than was that of the scribes and pharisees. It is almost *verbatim* the righteousness, and the only righteousness, which Jesus commends.

This is Eliphaz's idea of righteousness put negatively:—

"Is not thy wickedness great?

Neither is there any end to thine iniquities.

For thou hast taken pledges of thy brother for naught,
And stripped the naked of their clothing.
Thou hast not given water to the weary to drink.
And thou hast withholden bread from the hungry. . . .
Thou hast sent widows away empty,
And the arms of the fatherless have been broken."

(Job xxii. 5-7, 9).

Now take the same thing positively, as Job replies out of the deepest conviction of his heart :—

"Till I die I will not put away mine integrity from me.
My righteousness I hold fast, and will not let it go."

(Job xxvii. 5, 6.)

"When the ear heard me, then it blessed me ;
And when the eye saw me, it gave witness unto me :
Because I delivered the poor that cried,
The fatherless also, that had none to help him.
The blessing of him that was ready to perish came upon me :
And I caused the widow's heart to sing for joy.
I put on righteousness, and it clothed me :
My justice was as a robe and a diadem.
I was eyes to the blind,
And feet was I to the lame.
I was a father to the needy :
And the cause of him that I knew not I searched out.
And I brake the jaws of the unrighteous.
And plucked the prey out of his teeth" (Job xxix. 11-17).

"Come, thou blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for *thee* from the foundation of

the world." And this is how the Eastern poet depicts the inheritance of the kingdom, through the mouth of Job, in its supremacy and power :—

"My steps were washed with butter,
And the rock poured me out rivers of oil ;
When I went forth to the gate unto the city !
When I prepared my seat in the broad place,
The young men saw me and hid themselves,
And the aged rose up and stood ;
The princes refrained talking,
And laid their hand on their mouth ;
The voice of the nobles was hushed,
And their tongue cleaved to the roof of their mouth."

(Job xxix. 6-10).

To take one more illustration within the limits of the sacred Writings.

We find that, after a great mental struggle and enlargement of mind, St. Peter was arraigned before a tribunal of Jewish Christians in Jerusalem for conduct which had at length been brought into harmony with the very old Christian doctrine we are discussing. Possibly among the Christians of the nineteenth century there are some who, in principle, would find themselves very much at home in the company of these Jerusalem converts.

And Peter, who had been a stickler for condi-

tions qualifying him to be the great champion of the ritualistic theology of the Jerusalem Christians, is now on his defence because he had been in and eaten with a man who was stamped as "unclean." This man, who, till Peter's visit to him at Cæsarea, had been ignorant of the Christ, was a centurion of the Italian cohort, and is described by the inspired Writer of the Acts of the Apostles as *a devout man, and one that feared God with all his house.*

We have no difficulty in identifying this heathen man with *the righteous*, as they are defined by the Son of man; for Cornelius is further made known to us *as one who gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God alway.* What could be clearer than this definition of the genuine righteousness of the kingdom? Gracious and generous in deed, Cornelius manifested his faith in God in that he "prayed to God alway."

Thy prayers and thine alms are gone up as a memorial before God, is simply a parallel to *Come, ye blessed of my Father.*

Only a vision could have given the indispensable shock which led to a complete break-down of

Peter's prejudices. But Cornelius's messengers confirm Peter's vision when they meet Peter and inform him in these words : *Cornelius a centurion, a righteous man, and one that feareth God, and well reported of by all the nation of the Jews.*

Peter was now quite convinced, and said : *Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons : but in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is acceptable to him.*

The ill-informed and therefore timid Christians in our time, who are crying out in dismay at the scepticism of "modern thought," are just where Peter was before he had the vision at Joppa ; and, though nothing is too hard for the Lord, it really would seem that only something like a Joppa vision would suffice to shake them out of their narrow prejudices, and enable them to glorify Him, who is no respecter of persons, in the grace He diffuses among all nations. And if this devout centurion is accepted by God's Holy Spirit as among the righteous, why not other good heathen ? Thank God, history affords many a bright witness to the light and grace which have shone out all the brighter, because that light was manifested in

places where darkness covered the earth and gross darkness the people ; in periods marked by almost incredible deeds of violence, cruelty, and horror.

Darkest before dawn—and then our Lord Himself appeared upon the scene. He looked round on the appalling spectacle of contemporary humanity now at about its worst. He looked back, too, through previous dark ages of the world's history, and He reminds us that in those old-world sinks of iniquity there were some jewels of imperishable worth. It shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon, for Sodom and Gomorrah, in the day of judgment than for such highly-favoured places as Chorazin and Bethsaida : so that they would rise in judgment against these impenitent contemporaries.

Familiar as household words are the names of some of the righteous heathen that shine, and will continue to shine, as stars in the kingdom of the great Father.

Let us recall a few.

Could we confront Peter with Plato and Socrates, after such a vision as that which made the scales fall from his eyes at Joppa, should we

not hear him giving thanks to God that there were other righteous men besides Cornelius who had not received the grace of God in vain? And we can imagine Paul appearing on the scene, with his knowledge of the Epicurean and Stoic philosophy, a knowledge which Peter did not possess, and saying—

“Ye men of Athens, in all things I perceive that ye are somewhat religious. For as I passed along, and observed the objects of your worship, I found also an altar with this inscription, TO AN UNKNOWN GOD. What therefore ye worship in ignorance, this set I forth unto you. The God that made the world and all things therein, he, being Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands; neither is he served by men’s hands, as though he needed anything, seeing he himself giveth to all life, and breath, and all things; and he made of one every nation of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, having determined their appointed seasons, and the bounds of their habitation; that they should seek God, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he is not far from each one of us: for in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain even of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring. Being then the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and device of man” (Acts xvii. 22-29).

Peter claims the centurion. Paul claims the

Greek poet. It is even so, says Paul; you are the offspring of God, and on this he builds an argument.

We are appalled by the gross darkness of the heathen world, but streaks of heavenly light here and there arrest our attention; and while the gravitation of evil seems to be to lower depths of sensuality and depravity, we are all the more deeply impressed with the manifestation of the Spirit which reveals itself in the noble conceptions of duty, the piety and the brotherliness which burn with no flickering feebleness in the lives of many a good heathen. We know very well that the Greeks were, as a rule, very indifferent to the children of poverty, and to the degradation of slaves, but this only demonstrates the necessity of the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ to explain the self-abnegation and kindness of many a good citizen.

If we turn to Egypt, we find that of the forty-two sins of the Egyptian code, of which every Egyptian had to clear himself, in justification, before the assessors of Osiris, one was that of cruelty. "I have not been cruel to any one."

another, "I have not kept milk from the mouth of sucklings:" another, "I have not ill-used my slaves." And in the Ritual of the Dead is found the following striking parallel to our Lord's law of life and of judgment—

"I gave my bread to the hungry,
And drink to him that was athirst;
I clothed the naked with garments;
I sheltered the wanderer."

Self-renunciation as the foundation of all righteousness is characteristic of Buddhism. *Ill-will* is one of the three deadly enemies of the religious life. Its destruction is to be effected by the cultivation of its opposite—*love*. "Let the Arahats cultivate good-will without measure towards all, allowing no stint or obstruction by any sense of differing or opposing interests, whether from the world above, below or around."

When Christians have shut themselves up to their narrow views of the divine manifestation, and have clean forgotten that God's spirit strives with all men—all His children: when *they* cut the channels through which are to flow the waters of salvation, in forgetfulness that the divine grace

can and does descend in fertilising showers, or distil as the dew without passing through any outward or historical channel whatever, we need not be very surprised to learn that "when the early Jesuit Fathers first came in contact with the institutions of Buddhism they were startled and even shocked at the close resemblance which they presented to Latin Christianity, and that in their perplexity they ascribed this divine grace to the devil."

So, too, Justin Martyr, staggered by the Hellenic analogies between the mysterious rites of the God Mithras and the Eucharist, and between the birth legends of the gods and the incarnation, gives the credit to "wicked dæmons in their devilish imitation." But let us do justice to this early Father of the Christian Church who mentions Heraclitus favourably, and who held the "immanence of the *logos* in Socrates and in the barbarians."

Dean Stanley has shown how largely indebted are Christian forms and institutions to "barbarian" sources. Even some of our own theological beliefs have filtered through Jewish history from

Babylonish sources. Christian missionaries, on the other hand, have been startled by the discovery among the heathen of beliefs gleaming with divine light and love. They have been amazed. They carried the lamp of God into regions of darkness, and lo! they found the light was already shining. In their perplexity they have ignored the Father of Light, and have ascribed the fact to the father of lies!

Why should we be timid in acknowledging God where we actually find Him, especially when, in our own Scriptures, we are commended to a Persian, by the later Isaiah, who, though a sun-worshipper, is alluded to as "the Messiah" or "Anointed of the Lord?"

Verily we have some hope of the Christian Church, when at a recent Church Congress in England, the "false prophet," that "wily imposter," Mahomet, is acknowledged to have something vital about him!

In the *Scandinavian* mythology there are bright gleams of heavenly light, and a recent writer¹ remarks: "It has many broken lights of

¹ The Hon. Rasmus B. Anderson.

Christianity in it. The similarity, in many parts, only makes us wonder how it grew. Anyhow it saves us from having a low idea of the character of our rude ancestors."

The theology of a people reflects their habit of thought, their character, their life. And when we find, if only bare traces of the idea of righteousness and truth and love, especially when their ultimate triumph over evil is believed in, we may be sure that the witness of God has been felt, if not formally recognised.

We might quote well-known passages from Plato in illustration. Striking parallels to that which is purest, noblest, and most Christian in our holy religion are to be found in the writings of this Greek philosopher.

Let us take one or two less familiar instances.

Phocion, the Athenian general, is thus alluded to by Plutarch :—

"As to Phocion, he never exerted himself against any man in his private capacity, or considered him as an enemy, but he was inflexibly severe against every man who opposed his motions and designs for the public good. His behaviour, in other respects, was liberal, benevolent, and humane; the unfortunate he was always ready to assist, and he pleaded even for

his enemy if he happened to be in danger. His friends one day finding fault with him for appearing on behalf of a man whose conduct did not deserve it, he said, 'The good have no need of an advocate.' Aristogiton, the informer, being condemned and committed to prison, begged the favour of Phocion to go and speak to him, and he hearkened to his application. His friends dissuaded him from it, but he said, 'Let me alone, good people. Where can one rather wish to speak to Aristogiton than in prison?'"

"As to his (Alexander's) munificence to Phocion all agree that he sent him one hundred talents. When the money was brought to Athens, Phocion asked the persons employed in that commission, 'Why, among all the citizens of Athens, he should be singled out as the object of such bounty?'—'Because' said they, 'Alexander looks upon you as the only honest and good man.'—'Then,' said Phocion, 'let him permit me always to retain that character, as well as really to be that man.' The envoys then went home with him, and when they saw the frugality that reigned there, his wife baking bread, himself drawing water, and afterwards washing his own feet, they urged him the more to receive the present. They told him, 'It gave them real uneasiness, and was indeed an intolerable thing, that the friend of so great a prince should live in such a wretched manner.' At that instant a poor old man happening to pass by, in a mean garment, Phocion asked the envoys, 'whether they thought worse of him than of that man?' As they begged of him not to make such a comparison, he rejoined, 'Yet that man lives upon less than I do, and is contented. In one word, it will be to no purpose for me to have so much money if I do not use it, and if I were to live up to it, I should bring

both myself and the king, your master, under the censure of the Athenians.' Thus the money was carried back from Athens, and the whole transaction was a good lesson to the Greeks, that the man who did not want such a sum of money was richer than he who could bestow it."

Phocion's unswerving devotion to truth and duty, as well as his conviction that amid the corruptions of Athens he could never become popular, is seen in the fact that in a debate, when his opinion happened to be received with universal applause, he turned to his friends and said: "Have I inadvertently let some bad thing slip from me?" Phocion suffered a death similar to that of Socrates, and he suffered as magnanimously.

The vanity of human greatness was once brought home to Alexander the Great, revealing the fact that, notwithstanding the giddy height to which his proud victories had exalted him, he was not destitute of spiritual faculty. Alexander once drew near to Diogenes with his attendants, when he asked Diogenes if there was anything he could do for him, Diogenes replied: "Only stand a little out of my sunshine." Alexander was so struck with surprise at finding himself so little regarded, and saw something *so great in that carelessness*, that,

while his courtiers were ridiculing the philosopher as a monster, he said, "If I were not Alexander I should wish to be Diogenes."

Cimon, the Athenian admiral, did not rise probably much above the licentious atmosphere by which he was surrounded; but he ordered the fences of his fields and gardens to be thrown down, that strangers as well as his own countrymen might freely partake of his fruit. He had a supper provided daily at his house, in which the dishes were plain, but sufficient for a multitude of guests. Every *poor* citizen repaired to it at pleasure. When he walked out, he used to have a retinue of young men well clad, and if he happened to meet an aged citizen in a mean dress, he ordered some of them to change clothes with him. Some of the young men carried money, and when they met in the market-place with any necessitous person, of decent appearance, they took care to slip some pieces into his hand, as *privately* as possible.

Pericles, who employed Phidias to adorn Athens with imperishable monuments of art, when he had to speak in public, always first addressed a prayer to the gods. He had abundant opportunity, says

Thucydides, of amassing wealth, but yet he never added a drachma to his paternal estate.

The Spartan legislator Lycurgus, determined on the conquest of luxury, and the extermination of the love of riches. The rich and the luxurious were offended and grew indignant, and one day Lycurgus was assaulted with stones, so that he was forced to seek refuge in a temple. Alexander, a not ill-tempered but hasty young man, came up with him, and wounded him severely in his eye with a stick. Lycurgus stopped short, but calmly showed his wounded face streaming with blood. They were struck with shame and sorrow, and gave up Alexander to him, with deepest expressions of regret. Lycurgus thanked them all for their care of his person, and dismissed them all except Alexander, whom he took into his house, showing him no ill-treatment in word or deed, only making him wait on him instead of his usual attendants. The youth without murmuring did as he was commanded. The impression made in his mind by the treatment he received at the hands of Lycurgus was reported to his friends, who learned that Lycurgus was not severe and proud as Alex-

ander had supposed him to be, but that he was above all others gentle, good-hearted and engaging in his manners.

Solon, the sage and lawgiver of Athens, reminds us of Him who taught us to say, "Forgive us our debts;" for the first of his public acts was, that debts should be forgiven, and that no man for the future should take the body of his debtor for security. Christian England, somewhat recently only, blotted out this harsh law from her Statute-book.

Timoleon, the regenerator of Sicily, would not allow the false charges of Demænetus to be suppressed at the voice of the people; he only said he could not sufficiently express his gratitude to the gods for granting his request, in permitting him to see all the Syracusans *enjoy the liberty of saying what they thought fit.*

Pelopidas, the Theban general, when departing for the army, was followed to the door by his wife, who besought him with tears to take care of himself; he answered, "My dear, private persons are to be advised to take care of themselves, but persons in public character to *take care of others.*"

Through all the plays of Æschylus runs the thought of divine *justice* and of implacable destiny. In the Eumenides, moral conflicts brought to satisfactory issue, the bright Olympic goddess *appeasing* the dark spirits of vengeance, and the severity of the ancient bloodthirsty justice yielding to human kindness.

The graces of the Stoics (*χαρίτες*), as to whose names, numbers and qualities Chrysippus had given the fullest discussion, represent the virtues of *benevolence* and *gratitude*. Our fellow-men ought to be loved from the heart. They ought to be benefited not for the sake of outward decency, but because the benefactor is penetrated with the joy of benevolence, and thereby benefits himself. The two fundamental points insisted upon by the Stoics, are the duty of *justice* and the duty of *mercy*.

Pythagoras, who knew something of the wisdom of Egypt, the Magi of Persia, as well as the learning of Greece, who insinuated the doctrine of transmigration for the sake of preventing cruelty to animals, we may be sure was among those who did not forget the claims of poverty and distress

among his fellow-men ; and the humane and merciful Plutarch follows Pythagoras.

Aristides "the just" was not only good but exemplified in his own life the divine injunction "Love your enemies." His appreciation of *liberty* we learn from his message to the Lacedæmonians : the people of Athens would not take all the gold either above or under ground for the liberties of Greece. Though he extended the dominion of Athens over so many people, he himself continued *poor*, and esteemed his poverty no less a glory than all the laurels he had won. He did not leave enough money to pay the expenses of his funeral.¹

Cicero represents much of the best thought

¹ Had Aristides been in the place of the young man who could not respond to the call of Jesus, because he was rich,—Aristides would have felt no difficulty on that score. "For this must be said, that though he extended the dominions of Athens over so many people, he himself continued poor, and esteemed his poverty no less a glory than all the laurels he had won. The following is a clear proof of it. Callias the torch-bearer, who was his near relation, was prosecuted in a capital cause by his enemies. When they had alleged what they had against him, which was nothing very flagrant, they launched out into something foreign to their own charge, and thus addressed the judges : 'You know Aristides, the son of Lysimachus, who is justly the admiration of all Greece. When you see with what a garb he appears in public, in what manner do you think he must live at home ? Must not he who shivers here for

and life of ancient Rome. We are straitened by the large legacy of good things he has left us. To make only one quotation: "Nothing so truly characterises a narrow grovelling disposition as to love riches; and nothing is more noble and exalted than to despise riches if you have them not, and if you have them to employ them in beneficence and liberality."

God seems never to have left Himself without witness in fruitful lives as well as fruitful seasons. The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews bids us look at the great cloud of witnesses to the want of clothing, be almost famished there, and destitute of all necessities? Yet this is the man, whom Callias, his cousin-german, and the richest man in Athens, absolutely neglects, and leaves with his wife and children in such wretchedness; though he has often made use of him, and availed himself of his interest with you.' Callias perceiving that this point affected and exasperated his judges more than anything else, called for Aristides to testify before the court, that he had many times offered him considerable sums, and strongly pressed him to accept them, but he had always refused them, in such terms as these: 'It better becomes Aristides to glory in his poverty, than Callias in his riches; for we see every day many people make a bad as well as a good use of riches, but it is hard to find one that bears poverty with a noble spirit; and they only are ashamed of it who are poor against their will.' When Aristides had given in his evidence, there was not a man in the court who did not leave it with an inclination rather to be poor with him than rich with Callias."

principle and power of faith, drawn from Jewish history. We may also look at the great cloud of witnesses to the same principle, especially as it is expressed in the lives of good heathen, of whom time would fail to tell.

How beautifully Seneca conceives of the spirituality of God when he says: "There is no land where man cannot dwell—no land where he cannot uplift his eyes to heaven; wherever we are, the distance of the divine from the human remains the same." Being exiled and deprived of his possessions, he exclaims: "And as for poverty, every one who is not corrupted by the madness of avarice and luxury knows that it is no evil. . . . How little does man need, and how easily he can secure that. . . . It is the soul that makes us rich or poor, and the soul follows us into exile and finds and enjoys its own blessings even in the most barren solitudes." If Moses taught, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself;" Seneca taught, "Man is born for mutual assistance." And if St. Paul said, "We being many are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another," Seneca wrote (Letter 95), "Do we teach that he

should stretch his hand to the shipwrecked, show his path to the wanderer, divide his bread with the hungry? . . . when I could briefly deliver to him the formula of human duty: all this that you see, in which things divine and human are included, is one: *we are members of one great body.*" And if our Lord taught the modesty of genuine kindness in, "Let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth," Seneca taught, "Let him who hath conferred a benefit hold his tongue. . . . In conferring a favour nothing should be more avoided than pride."

"Few men," says Farrar, "have written more finely or with more evident sincerity about truth and courage, about the essential equality of man, about the duty of kindness and consideration to slaves, about tenderness even in dealing with sinners, about the glory of unselfishness, about the great idea of humanity as something which transcends all the natural and artificial prejudices of country and of caste. . . . He was no apathetic, self-contained, impassable Stoic, but a passionate, warm-hearted man, who could break into a flood of unrestrained tears at the death of his friend

Annæus Serenus, and feel a trembling solicitude for the welfare of his wife and little ones. 'I am glad to learn,' says Seneca, in one of his letters to Lucilius 'that you live on terms of familiarity with your slaves. Are they slaves? Nay, they are men. Slaves? Nay, companions. Slaves? Nay, humble friends. Slaves? Nay, *fellow-slaves*, if you but consider that fortune has power over you both. . . . Are they not sprung' he asks, 'from the same origin, do they not breathe the same air, do they not live and die just as we do? . . . The blows, the broken limbs, the clanking chains, the stinted food of the *ergastula*, or slave prisons, excited all Seneca's compassion, and in all probability presented a picture of misery which the world has rarely seen surpassed, unless it were in that nefarious trade which England to her shame once practised, and, to her eternal glory resolutely swept away."¹

If Seneca's actual life revealed much weakness and inconsistency of character, he was not unsound at heart, and was exalted in his conceptions of virtue.

¹ *Seekers after God*, p. 190.

Epictetus the slave stands out of the surrounding darkness with still brighter lustre. Late in life, Epictetus increased his establishment by taking an old woman as a servant. The cause of his doing so shows an almost Christian tenderness of character. According to the hideous custom of infanticide which prevailed in the pagan world, a man with whom Epictetus was acquainted exposed his infant son to perish. Epictetus in pity took the child home to save its life, and the services of a female were necessary to supply its wants. Such kindness and self-denial were all the more admirable, because pity, like all other deep emotions, was regarded by the Stoics in the light rather of a vice than a virtue.

"*On the tenderness and forbearance due to sinners,*" is the title of one of the *Discourses* of Epictetus, and he abounds in exhortations to forbearance in judging others. In one of his *Fragments* he tells the following anecdote: A person who had seen a poor shipwrecked and almost dying pirate took pity on him, carried him home, gave him clothes, and furnished him with all the necessaries of life. Somebody reproached

him for doing good to the wicked: "I have honoured," he replied, "not the man, but humanity in his person."

Epictetus.—"Nothing is meaner than the love of pleasure, the love of gain and insolence: nothing nobler than high-mindedness, and gentleness, and philanthropy, and doing good." Does he not come very near St. Paul who wrote: "Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded. . . . That they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate" (1 Tim. vi. 17, 18).

Epictetus.—It is our relation to God which makes us reverence ourselves, it is that which should make us honour others. "Slave, will you not bear with your brother, who has God for his father no less than you? But they are so wicked, perhaps thieves and murderers. Be it so, then they deserve all the more pity. You don't exterminate the blind, or deaf, because of their misfortunes, but you pity them: but how much more to be pitied are wicked men! Don't execrate them. Are you yourself so very wise?"

It is no discredit to enlightened Christians

to say that Epictetus and Marcus Aurelius—the one a slave, the other an emperor—are so well known and so much admired among them. That Epictetus, out of the lowest depths of degradation in the State, to which a man can be subjected, could develop such exalted ideas, and so high a life, is a striking proof of the independence of the soul of its outward surroundings. While an Epictetus could rise above the brutalising effect of Roman slavery, whose natural tendency was to extinguish all self-respect in the poor slave; a Marcus Aurelius could rise superior to the hardening influence of Roman imperialism, in which an emperor living and moving, at his own sweet will, in an atmosphere of corruption, wealth and voluptuousness, could hardly fail to fall a victim to its temptations and fascinations. Truly, slave or emperor, Jew or Greek, bond or free—God is no respecter of persons.

M. Aurelius.—"Men exist for the sake of one another. *Teach them, or bear with them.*"

Some of these good heathen lived in the early days of Christianity. But the Christians were regarded as but a contemptible sect of the Jews.

Their cause was misrepresented and prejudiced ; and we have the singular spectacle, in some instances, of lives very much in harmony with the life and doctrine of our Lord, combined with a persecuting spirit of bitter opposition to Christianity. " I wot that through ignorance " it was so.

And is not this the case with regard to some men of great endowments who stand prominently out before us in modern history ? Take so recent a specimen as Voltaire. What is the cause of our perplexity in dealing with such a character as this ? *Whence did he get his idea of the Christ ?* We are told that every man in distress applied to his bounty. He delighted in assisting the wretched in whatever situation of life they might be placed. In the obscurity of his retreat he was always performing good actions. It is only necessary to mention Sirven and Calas, to recall to the recollection of every one the active beneficence of Voltaire. Nor must we forget his interference on behalf of the 15,000 slaves of the monks of St. Claude, whom he contributed to render free and happy ; his manufactory of watches which formed an asylum for those who wished to escape the broils

and persecutions at Geneva ; or his rescuing from the hands of the Jesuits the estates of six gentlemen of the name of Crassi.

How hesitating, how apologetic we are when proffering a claim for a place among the righteous for those heathen, some of whom shame our love of ease and our pursuit of pleasure, by their complete indifference to these fascinating things in their devotion to the good of their fellow-men.

Are we afraid that God will charge us with laxity of morals? that Jesus will ignore us for our honest recognition of Christian virtue in these good heathen? Is there any despite done to the Spirit of grace in our manly avowal of brotherhood with these men? Or are we afraid of "our Church" and its anathemas? our sect and its excommunication?

Is it not true that in some ages of the Christian church, the world, in some aspects, has contrasted favourably with the church? The hardness of heart, the cruelty, the terrors of the church, especially when allied with the civil power, —its utter disregard of the rights of conscience,

and its shameful caricature of Christianity itself, are simply appalling.

Scepticism must, indeed, be put to severe straits, when, for an argument against Christianity, it discovers that so much of Christianity has been anticipated in the holy writings and pious lives of heathen philosophers! How pointless the sneer of the infidel, when, from the throne of His glory the *human* King—the Son of *man*—is claiming very kindred with these sweet heathen souls. Christianity before Christ; yea. It could hardly be the only true religion if nothing had been known of it, and if it had had no existence before *Anno Domini*.

Yet heathen sages sighed for some objective manifestation of the divine spirit which was in them: and Socrates ventures, in express words, to prophesy the future appearance of some heaven-sent Guide.¹

Let us not be misconceived when we claim for the philanthropy and virtue of good heathen an identity with the righteousness which our Lord commends.

The facts adduced are not to be explained

¹ Xen. *Memorabilia* i. iv. 14. Plato, *Alcib.* ii.

away. It is admitted that, in one direction or another, the lives of the best of them are grossly inconsistent with our Christian ideal. But here is the problem. When, for ages, darkness has covered the earth and gross darkness the people,—when heredity has accumulated and intensified the faults and abuses of generations, and environment is loaded with moral miasmata,—in a society where men glory in their shame, and the most debased idolatry is maintained,—how are we to explain the *streaks* of goodness and moral beauty in the teaching and lives of some men whose names history has handed down to us?

We look for holy and unselfish lives through God's grace and the influence of Christian nurture, education, and example, though we rarely light upon a man whose Christian career is absolutely perfect. But we are simply *amazed*, when out of the night of heathen darkness so heavenly a light should here and there shine forth; and when out of the depravity and corruption of personal, social, and political life, such virtues have been commended and practised as the best Christian among us would not be ashamed to own were his. We need

not be surprised, however, that these men could not emancipate themselves from a great deal of the superstition, the offences, the grossness of the moral atmosphere in which they breathed. Christians are only "being saved" with all the light and help by which they have been surrounded from infancy. These men, we must remember, were *groping after God, if haply they might find Him.*

What is the genesis of the righteousness whose existence we cannot deny? The light, indeed, may have been dim and flickering, but it was there. Whence the lofty moral conceptions of these men? their divine utterances? their magnanimous and self-oblivious actions? The theologies of Christendom offer no explanation; they only increase the difficulty. But the facts are not denied.

Peter admits and verifies the facts in his account of Cornelius, the centurion. Can the key to the problem be found anywhere else but in the fact that Christ is the light of the world, and that by His spirit He is not far from every one of us?

The criterion of righteousness—likeness to Christ Himself—is found not in "mighty works,"

“miracles,” or even sermons or utterance of parables, but in deeds of humanity. And are these deeds of mercy and beneficence small matters compared with the “mighty works”? Nay, we find that these are *the weightier matters of the law*. It requires no very great amount of Christian enlightenment to perceive that to speak with tongues of men and of angels, to have the gift of prophecy, to know all mysteries and all knowledge, and to possess the power to remove mountains (1 Cor. xiii.), is not by any means to have attained the qualification which justifies the assignment of a place at the King’s right hand. Prophecy, miracles, tongues, were not the greatest gifts of the Apostolic Church, nor would they stand for anything in the judgment.

Perhaps we may be able to trace in the short public career of our ever-blessed Lord a *progress* in the manifestation of the divine unction; just as we know that as a boy He grew in favour with God and man.

What, by the unspiritual, would be conceded the front rank in the manifestation of the life and power of Jesus, viz. *miracles*, to Jesus Himself and to

those who have much of His divine spirit, they must hold a very inferior rank even in the shape of testimony to the truth ; and as a qualification for the enjoyment of the kingdom of heaven must count for *nothing*.

Had Jesus been born among the Greeks, He might have begun as Paul essayed to begin at Athens, with a theistic argument among a motley crowd of philosophical theologians. But He was born into the midst of a people whose religion had degenerated into a very sensuous and sacramental system. The divine spirit whose light had beamed through the eyes of their old seers, and whose holy aspirations had been clothed in psalms the music of which was as the undertones of the heavenly harmony about the eternal throne, was gone. There was no inspiration ; for prophecy or spiritual teaching there was no room. Their hearts had grown so gross ; their theology had become so materialised, and their religion so perfunctory, that they could rise to no higher level than that which led them to seek *a sign*. And, like a considerate Teacher, our Lord let Himself down to the enfeebled capacity of His dull people

—His scholars, and He began with miracles.¹ And even then, beginning at the lowest rung of the ladder by which He would lead His people upward, they were astonished, and cried out : *What is this? a new teaching! What is this? a new teaching!* (Mark i. 27, Revised Version.)

But as He proceeded, we find Him assigning to miracles a very low place, and ultimately refusing to work them, when He found the people unwilling or incapable of making, by their influence, any progress towards a higher life. We know the school bell: the miracles called the people to school. Then came the teaching, which is as far above miracles as the heaven is higher than the earth. And that teaching is, as it ever will be, in advance of all human systems of philosophy. But in the judgment, philosophy or teaching, however divine and beautiful, will go for no more than miracles; and our Lord makes the highest grade in His University, *good deeds*, springing from a loving heart. Can anything be plainer? Read the passage again, and see

¹ It should not be forgotten that nearly all the miracles assigned to Him were in accord with the law of His gracious and humane kingdom.

if the supreme lesson taught by His life and death be not *self-sacrifice for the benefit of man*. To the Jews, as to some nowadays perhaps this would be "modern thought"—*a new teaching!*

"Oh Clarkson!" said Wilberforce, as he found him one Sunday morning in his study, surrounded by papers on the Slave Trade, "I wish you would think of your soul."—"Oh Wilberforce!" said Clarkson in reply, "I am so occupied with the miseries of these poor negroes that I have no time to think of anything else."

It may be objected that in the preceding pages a much higher estimate has been formed of the heathen than is justified by the facts. It will be contended that their spiritual conceptions were crude and imperfect; and that their lives, especially, were all more or less implicated in the prevailing licentiousness of their surroundings.

That it was so cannot be denied. But the grosser the darkness the more marvellous the light. The concession leaves the problem of goodness breaking forth through the vilest corruption untouched. Where shall the solution be



found? By what law of evolution are these streaks of light on the horizon of human history to be explained? The more fully the debasement in the pagan world of mind and morals, as manifested in its superstitions, its sensuality and its crimes, the deeper the perplexity in which the question must be enshrouded. Only by Christ is the problem solved.

Our wonder is not that these remarkable men were not perfect, but that there should be anything Christ-like whatever about them. Granted that the light was dim, that the path of life was choked with moral weeds, the marvel is that they saw so much, and that any trace of the path was discoverable by them. It is simply amazing.

On the other hand, would it be unfair on the part of the heathen, if they were to ask the meaning of the events which stand out most prominently in Ecclesiastical History? Far more amazing than the phenomena of "righteousness," springing up here and there in the realms of paganism, are the phenomena of unrighteousness flooding the world in the name of the *Son of man*.

Every century, since the days of the apostles,

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has had its confederacy of evil in the garb of Christianity. The destroying angel has sometimes devastated the land in the name of *Theology*. And when the priest has had the command of the civil power he has attained the greatest pre-eminence in evil.

To dethrone conscience—the divine crown of humanity—by force or by fraud, has been deemed a very small matter. Repudiating the claims of reason as well as of conscience, ignoring the fundamental elements of man's nature, clutching at the reins of government in the State, violating the sanctity of the home, and the inalienable rights and responsibilities of the individual, the church has gone forth to convert the world! To *convert* the world! Did the world need converting from ignorance? The church fostered it. Did the world need converting from hatred? The church fomented it. Did it need converting from cruelty? The church practised it with devilish ferocity. The righteousness of the Church has, indeed, exceeded the righteousness of the scribes and pharisees, with a vengeance! The key of knowledge might rust, or be carefully hidden away ;

but the keys of authority and power have hung flauntingly from the girdle of the Christian priest. The Church of Christ, in apostolic times, filled up the measure of the sufferings of Christ by patiently enduring them at the hands of both Jews and heathen. The post-apostolic church, ignoring both the teaching and example of Him whose name they bore, sought the conversion of men to Christianity by methods both irrational and unchristian. There is too much of actual church history in Dante's *Inferno* to make it pleasant reading for the Christian world. The gates of hell have often been thrown wide open in the fiendish atrocities which have been perpetrated in the name of Christ—atrocities which could hardly be matched in the foulest days of heathen barbarity. The blood-stained hands of the monks of Alexandria, under Cyril, contrasted darkly with the purity and sweetness of the teacher of heathen philosophy in Hypatia. By the time Christianity had allied itself with the civil power, under Constantine, it had forgotten Christ and the spirituality of His kingdom, and the great purport of His ministry—the service of man. And then

it was almost impossible to discriminate it, except in name, from the kingdoms of this world, in its ambition and its unscrupulous use of power. The same spirit of persecution of Christians under Roman emperors crept into the church, and carried with it all the most fearful terrors and crimes of which she had herself previously been the victim. Who is not familiar with the awful sufferings which are called to mind by an inspection of the Christian armoury? How replete with the implements of torture and destruction! The sword, the wheel, the dungeon, the galleys, the chain, the iron collar the squeezers of Chayla, Archbishop Sharpe's iron boot, the thumb-screw, the gibbet, the whip, the roasting-spit, the faggots and flames. These are but samples of the infamous catalogue which the ingenuity and malice of men, calling themselves Christians, devised and employed. What a grim interpretation of the apostle Paul's words : *For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal !*

A clearer apprehension of the Christ, and a truer estimate of the Christian life, is the special characteristic of these latter days. But from the annals of ecclesiastical history, the horrors of the

Inquisition, the sufferings of the Albigenses and Waldenses, the frightful persecution of the Huguenots, under Louis XIV, to say nothing of the enormities which have been perpetrated in the name of Christ, in our own country,—against Catholics, against Protestants, against Dissenters, against the Puritans, against the Quakers, against the Jews,—can never be effaced.

The Christianity of more recent times has been, and it is to be hoped will be, free from the guilt of such frightful crimes. Yet there have been Christian communities, even in our own times, guilty of refined methods of persecution, whereby hearts have been broken, and honest occupations destroyed, by the Shibboleths of religious parties, and a sinful ignoring of the sacredness of personal responsibility and the rights of private judgment. Acts of uniformity have been passed by petty conclaves many a time since the time of Charles II., and penalties have been inflicted by little despotic self-constituted authorities which have been inimical to Christian life and freedom.

Do we wonder at the light and virtue of an Epictetus who never heard of Jesus, or the

Christian Scriptures? We wonder, *with infinitely greater amazement*, that there have lived, in this Christian era, men, who having had the broad daylight of the Gospel to guide them, and who, professing to follow *the Lamb*, can have been guilty of crimes that have disgraced our common humanity.

Can we be surprised that such writers as the author of *The Service of Man*,<sup>1</sup> should have reached the conclusion that the service of God should be superseded by a more humane and practical service? Such writers get their ideas of the Christ from the prevailing Christianity. And, as long as the supreme interest of Christianity is made to centre in a post-mortem state of unending happiness or eternal woe, agnostics and secularists will be able to make a very good fight.

Mr. Cotter Morison saw this clearly enough. He quotes Paley,<sup>2</sup> who is willing to admit that "the teaching of morality is not the primary design" of the Gospel. "If I were to describe" (quoting Paley again) "in a very few words, the scope of

<sup>1</sup> *The Service of Man*: An essay towards the religion of the future. By J. Cotter Morison.

<sup>2</sup> *Evidences of Christianity*, pt. ii. chap. 2.

Christianity, as a *revelation*, I should say that it was to influence the conduct of human life, by establishing the proof of a future state of reward and punishment. . . . The great end and office of a revelation from God is to convey to the world authorised assurances of the reality of a future existence." "In other words," says Mr. Morison, "the purpose of the mission of Christ, was to make men fit for a future state of reward, and to supply sanctions which would deter them from conduct which would make them fit for a future state of punishment. Salvation in the next world is the object of the scheme, not morality in this."<sup>1</sup> Besides his quotations from Paley, Dr. Pusey, St. Alphonso de Liguori, and Mr. Spurgeon, Mr. Morison might have multiplied indefinitely the number of teachers who have put the subject in almost identical terms. From these diverse Christian theologians, Mr. Morison gathers that salvation means salvation from a future hell, and, in such a salvation, he sees nothing conducive to morality.

And who can gainsay him? To secure heaven and to escape hell, awakens the same sort of

<sup>1</sup> *Service of Man*, p. 66.

anxiety as possesses a man who would escape from a crowded theatre when a cry of fire has been raised. His concern for his personal safety overmasters every other consideration ; and his neighbours are trampled under foot and crushed to death in his frantic efforts to save himself. Such a seeking of salvation arouses no true sense of the worth of a human soul ; it stimulates to no admiration for the *character* of Christ ; it produces no effect in humbling a man on account of the damaging influence of sin on those divine faculties which make the soul precious ; it awakens no divine aspirations ; nor does it supply any motive to follow our Lord, in the laying down of our life for our fellows.

What Mr. Morison means by *morality* our Lord calls *righteousness*. And if Mr. Morison had got his Christianity from a study of Christ's life, instead of taking it from the Church and its theology, he might have had a better idea of the service of God ; for he would have found that the service in which the Son of man was absorbed, from the beginning to the end of His earthly life, *was* the service of man.

## VII

### THE FRATERNITY OF THE SON OF MAN

“ My Brethren.”

THE unity of Nature is not a mere figure of speech or a poetical fiction. Science has demonstrated the fact, and is ever bringing to light new illustrations of those laws of unity which charm the imagination and convince the reason. As a component part of Nature, man is no exception to Nature's law. And in his higher faculties and relations man belongs to the unity of the spiritual universe. More correctly speaking, the visible unity of the universe is not so much a parallel with, as it is a phenomenal manifestation of, its spiritual unity. *God is one : of him are all things.* Could the fact be more logically or more clearly demonstrated in any greater number of words? It lies here in a nut-shell.

The unity of the universe is not merely a



discovery of modern science, or a postulate of modern thought. The poetry of the Bible is full of it. God creates a world, and the pulses of His pleasure throb through all creation—all the sons of God rejoice. A bright star tells of the birth in Bethlehem. Nature veils her face while the dark deed of Calvary is being enacted. The power of heaven is reflected on the darkened face of humanity under the shock of a great crime, and the appalling explosion reverberates through the epochs of history. *The head is sick and the heart faint* when the body politic is oppressed by the prolonged misgovernment and cruel wrongs of the people. Humanity is one body, and if one member suffer, all the rest—directly or indirectly, suffer with it.

The history of crime—whether of despots who have wielded irresponsible power over the nations they have crushed, or of individuals who have been the scourge of families in private life—affords numberless illustrations of this text.

The scar of an evil inflicted on the body of humanity may never entirely disappear, and will even reappear in successive generations, a hereditary

physical and sometimes moral taint. Yes, Nature is ever protesting with no equivocal voice. And if she cannot heal the diseases by which men suffer, as if in charity, she will cover the reproach as far as she is able. So kind and forgiving is Nature, in spite of her alleged sternness : responsive to the touch of a friendly hand in the State, or in the individual, she will often, by her good genius return good for evil, and sometimes still more marvellously turn the curse into a blessing.

But when we talk of Nature's operations we are really thinking of God. In the story of Joseph and his brethren, we get, at its close, the key to it all. It is offered to us by the hero himself: *As for you, ye meant evil against me ; but God meant it for good, to bring to pass as it is this day, to save much people alive.* And yet it looks as if the whole future of Joseph and his family, and of their descendants, the Israelites, hinged on the merest accident,—the caravan of Midianite merchantmen passing in the nick of time.

But history is full of these merciful and kindly accidents. By a sort of click in the mechanism of English misrule, the American people started

on a career of independence which still astonishes by its marvellous developments, and which at the same time wins the admiration and the envy of the civilised world. Practically without a standing army, the States are impressing on our European populations, groaning under the nightmare of millions of soldiers, the lesson of *brotherhood and peace*. The accidental discovery of gold in Australia has led to colonisation on a scale which the world has never before witnessed ; and the colonies of the British Empire have unintentionally done, and are still doing, much to illustrate and to promote the brotherhood of man.

A babe is born,—an ordinary fact to outward observation,—but this babe is destined to mould the life and character, the progress and happiness of mankind. Except by birth, how could Jesus have entered into fraternal relations with us ? His title to brotherhood must be made good by His becoming in very deed one with us.

*His name shall be called Emmanuel, God with us.* Is this a merely poetical expression ? Is God with us as the *king* is with his subjects, but only in the sense of reigning over them,

and probably oppressing them with grievous exactions for the selfish purpose of gratifying his ambition and luxury?—as a *judge*, whose personal sympathies must be kept strictly in abeyance, while he administers a law which he may deem unjust, but by the letter of which he is bound to decide the cause before him?—as a *dispenser of good things*, but who also will have his price?—or as a human *priest*, who will propitiate an offended deity only at grievous cost to the penitent?

This is not *brotherliness*. But we see Jesus : *One like unto the Son of man. We know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, who counteth all our sorrows, and who in all our afflictions is himself afflicted.*

We cannot think of any suffering or shame which an innocent man may bear, which was not borne by our Lord. This is the justification to His claim to brotherhood with us.

We unhesitatingly identify as the brethren of our Lord, *the necessitous* (taking this term in its widest possible acceptance), whether they have been succoured or neglected by their fellow-men.

*For he who was made perfect through suffering is not ashamed to call them his brethren.*

A large section of Christendom finds a difficulty—an insuperable difficulty—in the way of accepting so wide an interpretation of the text, owing to the theology which limits the term “brethren,” in one way or another, sacramentally or by evangelical conversion, to those who have been brought into the Christian Church. But neither by direct statement nor by implication, have we any limitation of the sort here. And to contend that it is a necessary limitation of the term, is really to divest the reply of our Lord to the question, “*When saw we thee?*” of all its appropriateness and force.

Let it be borne in mind that the reply which comes *equally* from those on His right hand and those on His left, is undoubtedly an expression of *surprise*, that conduct towards those with whom our Lord identifies Himself, is regarded as kindness or unkindness towards Himself personally. And this feeling of wonderment can be due only to one of two possible causes : (1) that although utterly ignorant of the person and history of our Lord, they had, nevertheless, been, or had not been, actuated by His

*spirit*; or (2) that, knowing the Lord, they had failed to clearly apprehend His intimate union of nature and sympathy with the partakers of our common and suffering humanity.

It is also unquestionable that the assembled multitude before the judgment-seat must include peoples who would never have heard of the Christ of history, and who would be completely ignorant of the doctrines of Christianity as embodied in systems of theology, or of the New Testament Scriptures; for before Him are gathered *all* the nations.

The venue is taken clean out of the range of religiously conventional forms and observances, which are only possible in the case of ecclesiastical institutions, and proceeds on the broad and all-comprehensive ground of human kindness, equally possible to Jew, Christian, and pagan.

Theology has to do with the intellect, but the basis of the divine judgment is not intellectual but spiritual. Righteousness has to do with the heart; and its examination on the lines of human action, results in the judgment either as commendation or condemnation.

A believer in Christ and follower of the Lamb, as a matter of course, is among those on the right hand of the Son of man. But even some of these may be a little *surprised* too, to find (especially if they have been much addicted to the religious forms of a devout life) that there is no test whatever beyond that which is applied equally to all—heathen as well as Christian!

And it is here that our acquaintance with the Scriptures, and our knowledge of the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, saves us from any difficulty as to His meaning when He alludes to “the least of these his brethren.” With us He became *one* by birth. Partaking our nature He commits Himself to a share in our griefs and sorrows. He is thus also deeply compromised by our sins, for which, though personally holy, harmless, and undefiled, He suffered and died.

The plaintive regretful appeal to the Son of man by the left hand group—“Lord, when saw we thee?” suggests another thought. For the appeal seems to imply that had the personal necessities and sorrows of Him before whose throne of glory they are now arraigned come

under their notice, they would not have withheld their sympathy and succour. A latent sense of goodness, an intuition of consciousness of man's filial relation to God, is suggested. It would not amount to much, perhaps, as testimony in their favour. It stands for nothing on this occasion. Nay, it strengthens the conviction of the justness of their condemnation. And if only faintly, it does also suggest that, but for the hardening process of a selfish career, they might have been among the righteous at the right hand of the Judge. Sheer thoughtlessness, leading to indifference to the neighbour, may be the first faint penumbra of that outer darkness by which the evil heart is finally enshrouded.

One of the bases of modern Christian thought is *the brotherhood of man*. It had been obscured by the mists of authorised theology during many Christian centuries. Swept away by ecclesiastical brooms as heathen rubbish, it certainly is discovered here and there as so many bright spots in the dark places of heathendom, both ancient and modern. Strange that it should ever have been forgotten at all, and stranger still that it



should ever have been ignored, as false, by any follower of Jesus, when we see Him proclaiming and illustrating the doctrine in life and death—a doctrine which harmonises with our best intuitions, while the evidence from nature presses on us from every side.

All that is true is old. The brotherhood of man might indeed be suspected if it were only a modern thought. The brotherhood of man is certainly as old as Job.

“If I did despise the cause of my manservant or of my maidservant,

When they contended with me :

What then shall I do when God riseth up ?

And when he visiteth, what shall I answer him ?

*Did not he that made me in the womb make him ?*

*And did not one fashion us in the womb ?*

If I have withheld the poor from their desire,

Or have caused the eyes of the widow to fail ;

Or have eaten my morsel alone,

And the fatherless hath not eaten thereof ;

(Nay, from my youth he grew up with me as with a father,

And I have been her guide from my mother's womb ;)

If I have seen any perish for want of clothing

Or that the needy had no covering ;

If his loins have not blessed me,

And if he were not warmed with the fleece of my sheep ;

If I have lifted up my hand against the fatherless,  
Because I saw my help in the gate :  
Then let my shoulder fall from the shoulder-blade.

. . . . .

The stranger did not lodge in the street ;  
But I opened my door to the traveller" (Job xxxi. 13-22, 32).

Thus does Job give practical testimony to his belief in the brotherhood of man.

The fraternal relationship which our Lord claims with man is illustrated in another direction, and is thus expressed by Himself: *He that doeth the will of my father in heaven, the same is my brother, my sister, and my mother.* Our Lord was continually trying to lift men out of the lower and narrower application of terms, as in this instance, into their deeper and more spiritual significance. He did not ignore His family relationships when He claimed kinship with those who did the will of the great Father of us all : nor when He acknowledges His brotherhood with the necessitous and down-trodden did He thereby repudiate either His brotherhood with His kindred, after the flesh, or with those who did the will of His Father in heaven. But what He did mean was that He had special affinities with those who

do God's will, and peculiar sympathies with those who suffer.<sup>1</sup>

*It behoved him in all things to be made like unto his brethren*, and, as the manifestation of the great and loving Father, we hear Him saying, "I will declare thy name unto my brethren." (Read Heb. ii. 9-18).

It was not by any means incidentally, or secondarily, that our Lord accepted the fellowship of our sufferings, when He entered on His ministry among men. The tears He shed, and the tears He dried, were from the same deep fount of divine love. He who graced Simon's feast with His genial presence, accepting the respectable man's hospitality, fed the hungry multitude with bread. He who said: "If any man thirst let him come unto me and drink," asked, and received from the woman of Samaria, the cup of cold water. It was not, *primarily*, that He might share the society and the festivities of the well-to-do, that He clothed himself with the garment of our flesh, though He

<sup>1</sup> No great depth of spiritual insight is required to apprehend the tender thoughtfulness of the dying Saviour for His mother. To Mary He says, "Behold thy son;" and to John, "Behold thy mother."

did not condemn as sinful, *per se*, wealth, position, social life; but it was from first to last, and specially, His deliberate and generous purpose to descend to the lowest depths of want and suffering, that thereby He might, in infinite commiseration, deliver men and raise them up from their low estate. And these are emphatically and by choice His brethren.

We *fall* into a certain grade of society by birth and circumstances over which we have no control. We *choose* our friends, as a rule, according to our personal tastes and preferences, seeking, and often seeking eagerly, the influential or the intellectual and cultured. Our association with those on a lower level to ourselves is generally accidental and temporary: our active pity for poverty and distress, spasmodic and occasional. But our Lord took upon Him the form of a servant,—started with the clearly-defined purpose of service: devoting Himself to the alleviation of poverty and sorrow: and with unfaltering determination and unintermittent devotion, made it the sole business of His life to seek and to save those who were lost, a business from which the prospect of an ignominious death could not turn Him aside.

When saw we Thee?

Wast Thou, indeed, with the three Hebrew youths who were cast by Nebuchadnezzar into the burning fiery furnace? Wast Thou in Herod's foul massacre, among the heartbroken mothers and their murdered babes, as of a lamb slain from the foundation of the world? Wast Thou really among the impotent folk as they lay by Bethesda's pool, waiting to be let down into the healing water? Do we see Thee in the outraged man, on his way from Jerusalem to Jericho, when he fell among thieves? Is it Thy sustaining voice we hear among Thine imprisoned Apostles as, with their song in the night, they startle the affrighted jailer?

Hark! it is the voice of our Brother, "I have made thy sorrows mine. Thy burdens are mine. Upon thee, in love and faithfulness, they have also been laid." Think of them in this way. *Come unto me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.* Do you see these pierced hands and side? Look at them,

not as testifying so much against thee, to thy shame; I do not condemn thee. Rather look at them as evidence of my unquenchable love for thee. And, *go, tell my brethren.*

The identification of our Lord with His brethren has never been suspended or withdrawn. Another illustration is suggested. He suffered. He *endured the cross, despising the shame.* We need not mourn over this. His sufferings attested His enthusiasm for the work which the Father had given Him to do. His cross is His glory: and to all who have any of His burning zeal, it is a glory too. Such, however, is the oneness of Jesus with His brethren—the church—professing His name, that its sorrows are His griefs also: and the unfaithfulness of those who have named themselves with His name inflict fresh wounds on His body. Thus is He crucified afresh and put to open shame. Thus is He wounded in the house of His friends. We still hear Him saying, “The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me” (Rom. xv. 3).

Our Lord had a special mission and ministry to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, it is true.

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He was the seed of Abraham. He went unto His own. He loved the nation. He wept over Jerusalem. But He swept away "the Law" in fulfilling it. He broke down the middle wall of partition between Jew and Gentile, and thenceforward Jew and Gentile stand on exactly the same footing of equality before God. As regards *righteousness* they had always so stood. Dispensations, ages, dynasties, are temporary : they pass away. But the eternal principles of love and righteousness remain,—have always been the same in all countries of the world ; and in all ages and dispensations Jesus has had a pitiful eye on His brethren, and a gracious ear open to their cry.

## VIII

### DESTINY

“Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of these my brethren, even the least, ye did it unto me. . . . Depart from me, under a curse, into the eternal fire which is prepared for the devil and his angels. . . . And these shall go away into eternal punishment : but the righteous into life eternal.”

WE have already discussed the destiny of the righteous at some length. It is therefore unnecessary to do more than refer the reader to previous sections of this Exposition. And, but for preconceived notions, fortified by an array of learned theological opinion, almost, not quite, unanimous, a page or two might suffice for all that need be said on the destiny of those at the left hand of the King.

Our Lord was talking to His disciples—Jews—not far from the metropolis of their nation : and to get at His meaning we must remember this. We must also stand by our Lord while He



is warning them of the approaching end of the Mosaic dispensation, with all that appertained to it.

The relation of the Israelities to God involved a system of rewards and punishments, personal as well as national. These rewards and punishments were material in their nature, and were separated, as a rule, by no long interval of time, from the actions which brought down the tokens of the divine approbation or condemnation. The sanctions of the Law, both moral and ceremonial, speaking broadly, were what unspiritual people would call *substantial*, tangible, and within reach.

The polity of the Jews was framed in the infancy of their national existence, and, like little children, their capacity did not stretch beyond things seen and temporal. Their conceptions of God were thus strongly anthropomorphic. That God is a Spirit, and that with Him they had any spiritual affinity or relation was, with occasional exceptions, quite out of the range of their thought or experience. They knew no other world than this. Birth ushered them on to the stage of life, and, after playing his part, each child of Abraham

passed through the last scene to *sheol*,<sup>1</sup> another word for negation,—the negation of all that appertained to him and life and action. To them the being blessed in basket and in store,—the finest of the wheat, the increase of flocks and herds, treasures in changes of raiment, and in golden shekels and talents of silver were the unequivocal testimonies of the divine approbation. Long life, large families, and many generations were the symbols of prosperity and the signs of Heaven's smile. These were the substantial and much-coveted acquisitions. The devout and conscientious and scrupulous observance of their laws entitled them to expect an enjoyment of an abundance of good things. And, as a rule, they were not disappointed.

<sup>1</sup> This Hebrew word *sheol* occurs sixty-four times in the Old Testament Scriptures. In thirty instances it is translated "grave": and no theologian disputes that in other cases it should be translated grave or *state of the dead*. Its translation by the Anglo-Saxon word "hell," before this word had had put into it the gross conceptions of future punishment derived from heathen sources, was not a bad equivalent for *sheol*. The prophets give some faint intimations of a future life, but "life and immortality are brought to light by the Gospel." The Greek *hades* and the English *hell* have had meanings put into them, and these meanings are clearly traceable through Greek up to Egyptian sources (see Appendix A).

These ideas still prevailed when our Lord entered on His work among His own people. We need not refer, in detail, to the illustrations in His teaching on this subject. Reward and punishment were by no means kept out of sight. But nothing can be clearer than that to the Jewish mind the ground was entirely shifting. Jesus did not, for He could not, modify the eternal laws under which moral conduct is stamped with approval or disapproval in its natural results. Prudence, industry, virtue, as well as imprudence, idleness, and vice, are known by their fruits, and ever will be. Even this system of ethics (or righteousness) may have no higher principle than *self*. Kindness and pity, the basis of Christ's righteousness, does not *necessarily* coexist with these.

But as *the kingdom of God is within you, i.e.* spiritual, so its rewards and punishments must be spiritual too. But how startling this teaching must have been to His hearers! To understand it, they must acquire a new faculty, or the awakening of a faculty that was lying completely dormant. What to them could be a stranger reversal of their

axioms and habits of conduct, touching prosperity, than this? *Give, and it shall be given unto you ; good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, shall they give into your bosom* (Luke vi. 38). This method of divine acquisition must have seemed to them, as it does to us, a simple inversion of the worldly method. So gross had the heart of that people waxed, that no verbal teaching, however clear and authoritative, appeared able to touch it effectually. The whole system must be destroyed ; and the temple, the symbol of it all, must be levelled with the ground. And more than all this—our Lord must give His life, if thereby He could make them understand.

But the lower, the less spiritual conception of rewards and punishments falls in with the capacity and the fleshly disposition of the spiritually undeveloped mind : and from the readiness with which the Christian Church has adopted, more or less unintentionally and unconsciously, the Jewish idea of the divine government, we cannot help thinking that the world is still in its infancy.

In the belief that God rewards the righteous, and inflicts penalties on the unrighteous, Jews and

Christians are agreed. But in what essential way does the current conception of the subject among Christians differ from that of the Jews?

We think that, though our Lord surprised the Jews by His teaching about rewards and punishments, Christians are still very much at one with the Jews.

1. The rewards are held to be external to the recipient.

2. They are given or imposed according to the arbitrary will, or "the good pleasure" of the Judge, and therefore *might*, conceivably, be withheld or modified. For

3. They are not *necessary* consequences of conduct.

The only difference is that while the Jew looked for his reward in this world, the Christian looks for it in the next.

It is because the Christian Church has fallen in with the worldly and Jewish estimate of God and His government, that popular theology is so grossly material in its representations of the divine administration. We question whether the Eastern mind was so thoroughly earthly in its conceptions

of reward and punishment as the Christian, through the influence of priestcraft, especially when we bear in mind that the affairs of our Kosmos are, on the received theory, carried into another world, where we might expect a great deal that is grossly material might be dropped. But the highly poetical and sensuous imagery of the Oriental, has been imported into our colder and more prosaic Western world, as so much literal fact. And the inducements to lead a godly, righteous, and sober life, are conceived to be most influential and effective when they appeal to our *acquisitiveness*. Heaven is to be striven after, because its attainment is well worth a few sacrifices. Hell is to be escaped, by all means, even if present gratification must be denied. The presentation of the Gospel is frequently nothing more than an appeal to the cupidity of a selfish egoism—a powerful stimulus to that very feeling which it is the first object of Christianity to extinguish.

We do not say that this is the unvarying teaching of the Christian Church. On the contrary, we rejoice that there is a growing appreciation of the spirituality of the religion of Jesus and of His

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teaching on the subject we are discussing, especially among the most able and the most spiritually-minded both of Great Britain and America.

There is certainly one characteristic of sheep which also marks our Christian theologians. They are gregarious. They must not get out of line along the well-trod track. The green pastures of "Catholic doctrine" were laid down with the greatest care by some of the early pastors, and these they fenced round with anathemas so fearfully strong that any shepherd coming after, who should pull down the fences or attempt to enlarge the enclosure, was given up and denounced as lost. We must not attach too much importance, therefore, to the unanimity of Christian commentators. Very few are really capable of an *unbiassed* examination of the subject. Nearly all are pledged to what is called the doctrine of final judgment, so that interpretation has of necessity become a foregone conclusion.

Now, if our statements touching the King, the nature of the kingdom, and the inheritance of the saints, are true, the character of the punishment of the unrighteous is also tolerably clear.

The difficulty of even presenting a statement of divine truth, whose acceptance would involve a sweeping away of the ground upon which a doctrine of inconceivably awful import has been supposed undoubtedly to rest, is almost insuperable. Preoccupied with a dogma which they never heard questioned, and which they received in childhood as a matter of course, some minds would be well-nigh upset by a doubt being thrown upon the truth of their belief. Not only preoccupied but quite easy and lighthearted, they had better be let alone. We once heard a person say that disbelief in the devil jeopardised one's salvation! That is the kind of person of whom we should have no hope. "Ephraim is joined to idols, let him alone!"

The reader is again reminded that we are not here discussing Systematic Theology, or the Science of Religion, but rather religion itself—its fact, not its theory. If the dogma of an endless hell of suffering be taught in other portions of Scripture, we need only remark that it is not necessarily excluded, as a religious belief, because we show that something very different is taught



in this passage. If the dogma is not supported by this singularly poetical picture of our Lord, it *may* be supported by other scriptures. If there be no evidence for it more conclusive than can be found in this passage, we cannot help it. Our purpose is limited to an exposition of Matthew xxv., and we proceed at once to inquire what the fate of the unrighteous must be.

Take an illustration—not a parable, but a fact in actual life, which will throw a little light on the obscurity with which Christian theology has enshrouded this subject.

The story is told by Mark and by Luke in almost identical terms.

It was a bright day, a very bright day, when two or three mothers brought their infants to Jesus that He might touch them. For a moment our Lord was "moved with indignation," but not at the women<sup>1</sup> who sought His blessing, but at the disciples who were attempting to repulse them. *For, of children is the kingdom of heaven*

<sup>1</sup> Woman seems to have a genius for the kingdom of heaven. See her devotion, her courage, her self-obliviousness, and her unflinching faithfulness, in the Gospels, from beginning to end: yes, and in other parts of the Bible too.

. . . *whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall in no wise enter therein* ; and having filled the hearts of these mothers with a divine satisfaction, by taking the little ones in His arms and giving them His loving blessing, His attention is arrested from another quarter. For as He was going on His way, a young man who had heard of this remarkable Teacher, and of the revelations He was making of the Father and of the kingdom, came running up to Him, accosting Him with a becoming salutation, and kneeling to Him, asked, *Good Teacher, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?* We know what followed. The bright morning was clouded ; the young man's "countenance fell," and he went away sorrowful. The discovery had been made to him that the poor might help him to heavenly treasure, and he would none of their help, and he went away crestfallen. The little children brought nothing into the world with them but the smile of Jesus ; they knew nothing of the great possessions which had eaten into this young gentleman's heart ; *they* were of the kingdom of heaven. The fate of the young fellow astonished the disciples.

*Who then can be saved?* was their exclamation.<sup>1</sup> Jesus was no literalist; and this is what He promised to those who gave up everything—"for the Gospel's sake"—*a hundredfold now, in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions, and in the world to come eternal life.*

A singularly strong testimony to the genuineness of the story is the throwing in of the "persecutions." There is no disguising the fact here. This is not a forgery.

Now let those who worship the letter of the Bible explain the sacrifice and yet the larger possession of all the good things of this life if they can. It is important, because it involves a broad principle of interpretation. *How readest thou?* Shall we read in the letter or in the spirit of the Book?

But this little story is recalled for the illustration it affords of the use of terms we are now dis-

<sup>1</sup> Themistocles would not have found it so hard to enter into the kingdom of heaven as this young man. Two citizens courting his daughter, he preferred the worthy man to the rich one, and assigned the following reason: *He had rather she should have a man without money, than money without a man.*

cussing. The young man asks the question, "What shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?" We have in the reply, *treasure in heaven*; also the "kingdom of God"; *it is easier for a camel to go through the needle's eye, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.* The word "saved" in the exclamation of the disciples, *Who then can be saved?* if not entirely out of place, must be a synonym of "the kingdom of God." And the reply of Jesus points to a *present* salvation, and a possession of eternal life in the new dispensation.

Dispossess the mind of the *world to come* (a confused phrase, for we can only go to another *world*) and read what Jesus really did say,—the coming age or dispensation, *then very near at hand*, and we have the same thing that we meet with in Matthew xxv.—an inheriting of the kingdom by the righteous, or eternal life,—the life of the Gospel dispensation. These phrases connote neither place nor time, but a condition of righteousness and peace and joy in a holy spirit. This is the definition of the kingdom of heaven, and eternal life, by the good Teacher Himself.

It would astonish any one who is strong-minded

enough to lay aside all that he has been taught on this subject, and read afresh our Lord's teaching. The eternal life upon the enjoyment of which the righteous enter could not be more clearly defined than it has been by Him who taught it, and who was indeed the eternal life embodied. The life was made manifest in the Christ. By one of the Apostles He is spoken of as *the eternal life* (1 John i. 2). And here is our Lord's definition :—

*This is life eternal, that they should know thee the only true God, and him whom thou didst send, even Jesus Christ* (John xvii. 3).

The young man who went away sorrowful did not *know* God, and he was disappointed in the Christ, proving that he was ignorant of Him also.

Now we learn how those on the left hand depart under a curse. Do we not see that young man going away under the curse of wealth? Follow him as he goes still farther away from Jesus and His salvation. Who knows how much he suffered from the fire prepared for the devil and his angels? Of which more presently.

That eternal life is a present state of mind and

heart we are taught by John when he tells us that "no murderer *hath* eternal life" (John iii. 15).

Other texts there are : we select two more.

In the conversation with the Samaritan woman, Jesus said : "Whoso drinketh of this water shall thirst again ; but the water that I shall give him will be a well of water springing in *everlasting life* (eternal life or the life of the kingdom) (John iv. 14).

That eternal life may be striven after and attained, as a mode of spiritual being, is shown by Paul in his exhortation to the youthful Timothy : *O man of God, lay hold on eternal life* (1 Tim. vi. 12).

Eternal life, the kingdom of heaven, salvation, are expressions which denote that state of mind and life which result from the possession of Christ's spirit. We have the eternal life presented to us objectively in the Christ : the eternal life is subjectively realised in every Christ-like soul.

All this was strange to the people among whom the good Teacher moved. They lived under a dispensation, briefly designated THE LAW. They entered it by birth, they enjoyed its privileges,

such as they were, by national right. But to enter the new dispensation—to actually enjoy the blessings of the gospel age—they must be born again ; to enjoy the privileges of the kingdom of heaven they must possess and breathe its spirit. The kingdom which our Lord was introducing was *not meat and drink* (outward religious observances) but was internal and spiritual.

Now, just as “the righteous” are ever entering the kingdom, as has been already explained, so the unrighteous are ever being excluded. They have the sentence in themselves. In both cases it is a purely subjective process. They go away into the punishment of the kingdom ; they go away from Him, whose spirit they despise, into the consuming fire of their own selfish, hard-hearted, unsympathising natures. How present, how practical, how susceptible of demonstration this punishment is !

The law of love, which is the law of the kingdom, cannot be superseded. It is fundamental ; it is necessary ; while all other laws are accidental.

The moment a spiritual nature—a nature therefore related to God—is brought into existence, it is amenable to this law—the law of love—the

law proper to its nature, holy, just, and good. Taking cognisance of the thoughts and intents of the heart, its sanctions touch the conscience and tell upon the whole life. Even before the judgment-seat the outcome of the heart's thoughts and intents must be dealt with ; and the final judgment is declared on what man has *done* or left *undone*, in its reflex action on his nature.

Could the divine approval be expressed more fully than in the sweet satisfaction of a soul in harmony with its essential nature? Could the burning condemnation be more effective than in the fearful moral degeneracy, disintegration, and loss of all that is worth having in a human soul? All that a man hath will he give for his life ; self-possession is everything. Hence the admonition—*in patience possess ye your souls*. Christ came that we might have life more abundantly. The loss of soul is the most disastrous loss a man can incur, for it is the loss of love, of virtue, of courage, of faith, of hope—all that fortifies and beautifies a responsible being.

But those who in various modes of expression say, *We will not have this man to reign over us*,



who despise and reject the spirit and teaching of the Light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world, suffer exclusion from the kingdom of light and are simply left in the outer darkness in which their own failure and neglect have landed them. Do such persons ask, *When saw we thee?* The answer is, *Inasmuch as ye did it not.* And this means: Inasmuch as you refused the sunshine and loveliness of the world in which God placed you, with its blessed opportunities for unfolding a loveliness in your own lives which is akin to mine, thus hardening your hearts and deadening your spiritual susceptibilities:—being thus unrighteous, you have disqualified yourselves for the society and the sphere of the righteous.

It is only the neglect of culture. *Ye did it not.* An uncultured man must be a degenerate man. The unused talent is taken away. A man who never uses his eyes is blinded. A man who never listens is deafened. A man who never loves is hardened. It was just in this way the Lord hardened Pharaoh's heart. Negative conduct is damnable. It cannot be otherwise. "What, can't you play that music now? you could read any-

thing off at one time with ease."—"No, I am quite out of practice." *Just so.* You have not done a bad thing. No civic tribunal would have a word to say against you. Nor are you condemned for doing a bad deed; you are condemned for doing nothing. The sick man lay at your door; you kept it shut. The thirsty asked for water; you withheld the cup which, in your outstretched hand, might have gleamed with the heavenly hues of the rainbow round about the throne.

There were fetters to be loosed; you did not lift a little finger. You have been a reputable member of society; but what of that? You kept the commandments from your youth up; but so did the young man who came running to the Saviour. Did you give to the poor? Well, you were liberal at the offertory and the subscription list; but had you charity? Your opportunities were not fewer than theirs who are at the right hand of the throne; but you did not avail yourselves of them. The kingdom came as nigh to you as to them; but you refused to enter. "When saw we thee?" You would not see when there was anything of the sort to be seen; you turned

your head. You threw away the opportunity of securing unfailing treasure by clutching your money. Refusing to unloose the heavily-burdened, you forged your own fetters. Narrowing your sympathies you have grown too small for the kingdom. How could you possibly gain entrance into a kingdom whose law, whose motives, whose society, and whose whole business only awoke antipathies in your callous heart? Thus are you cursed : you have cursed yourselves.

Had you offered the cup of cold water to the thirsty, the spark of divine charity might have been kindled in your breast. Had you, instead of passing by on the other side, gone to help that fallen one, the pulses of divine sympathy would have throbbed through your veins with a fuller sense of life. Had you made an effort to strike off the fetters of that slave of self, you might have known the joy of spiritual freedom. The neglect of your opportunities leaves you far worse than you were before. For the closing of the heart against the appeal of suffering and want is itself a *hardening* process. If you will not give the heart fair-play it will become *diseased*. You

have done nothing for others ; but yours is the more serious loss—the greater damnation.

*Jesus saith, "I thirst."* Who that knows and loves Him, would not, in his dire extremity, have gladly shared the reproach of Christ, and taken his place by the cross. Who would not eagerly have run to moisten His parched lips? What millions now bearing His precious name would make any sacrifice to have the unutterable privilege of ministering to Him—of alleviating His suffering! How far would they not travel to show their love to Him! What privations would they not undergo, even to the sharing of His cross, if that were possible! Well, Jesus says *it is possible*. Nay, knowing how eagerly you would fly to the relief of His distress, how thankful you would be for an opportunity of showing your love to Him ; what comfort might come to you through fellowship with His sufferings. He has anticipated your longing—has provided for your comfort. He comes very near to your door—no need to take a journey to Jerusalem and Calvary. He says : "I am here—famished with thirst—in the person of a fellow-man." Will you give him to drink?

Have we now a glimpse of the punishment?

The sentence reads thus: *Depart from me, under your curse,*<sup>1</sup> *into πῦρ τὸ αἰώνιον*, the fire (punishment) of the dispensation, which is prepared for the devil and his angels. . . . *And these shall go away into κόλασιν*<sup>2</sup> *αἰώνιον*, the punishment of the dispensation. *Fire* is evidently here the equivalent of *punishment*. It is employed

<sup>1</sup> Whether the article be admitted or not,—whether we read with some ancient MSS. “under a curse,” or, with others, “under *your* curse,”—it is not so much a denunciation as a recognition of a subjective state or condition brought about by the hardening effect of unbrotherliness.

<sup>2</sup> The following from the Notes on St. Matthew's Gospel, by the Rev. A. Carr, M.A., in the Cambridge Greek Testament, under the general editorship of J. J. Perowne, D.D., Dean of Peterborough, will well repay careful perusal. *κόλασις* (der. from a root meaning to lop, prune, etc.) is “correction,” punishment that checks and reforms, not vengeance (*τιμωρία*). The two are distinguished, Arist. *Rhet.* i. 10, 17. The rare occurrence of *κόλασις* draws attention to its use here. The only other passage where it is found in N. T. is 1 John iv. 18, where the Apostle speaks of “perfect love” (*ἡ τελεία ἀγάπη*) giving confidence in the day of judgment (*ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ τῆς κρίσεως*); fear is inconsistent with that perfect love, because φόβος ἔχει κόλασιν—“hath the remedial correcting punishment even now, and so separates from good while it lasts.” In a profound sense that passage is cognate to this. Cf. also the use of *κολάζεσθαι*, 2 Pet. ii. 9, *ἀδικούς εἰς ἡμέραν κρίσεως κολαζομένους* (suffering punishment now) *τηρεῖν*. Cf. Acts iv. 21, *μηδὲν εἰρσικοντες τὸ πῶς κολάσωνται αὐτούς*, where the notion of restraint and

frequently in the sacred writings in the same sense.

It may be remarked that those who receive this sentence are not malicious, active, opponents of our Lord and of His dominions. They are *indifferent*. They may hardly be conscious that they are not on the Lord's side. They are surprised to find themselves where they are before the judgment-seat. Had it been possible to charge them with atheism or crime, some of them, at least, might have a good defence. But when they have their position explained to them, their mouths are shut.

But there were those who deliberately set themselves against the Lord and against His anointed. *As your fathers did, so do ye. Which of the prophets did not your fathers persecute? and they killed them which showed before of the coming of the Righteous One; of whom ye have now* reform is evident. Two passages of Aristotle's *Ethics* which exhibit the use of *κόλασις* agree with these instances: *μηγύουσι δὲ καὶ αἱ κολάσεις γινόμεναι διὰ τούτων· ἰατρεῖαι γὰρ τινὲς εἰσιν, Eth. Nic. ii. 3, 5, "they are a sort of remedies."* *ἀπειθοῦσι δὲ καὶ ἀφυστέρους ὁδοὶ κολάσεις τε καὶ τιμωρὰς ἐπιτιθέσθαι τοὺς δὲ ἀνιάτους (the incurable) ὅλως ἐξορίζειν, Eth. Nic. 10.*

The rebuke of the king is the beginning of the *κόλασις*.

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*become betrayers and murderers* (Acts vii. 52). These and such as these are the devil and his angels. The second chapter of the second Epistle of Peter gives a vivid description of these adversaries. An opponent under the garb of friendship, like Judas, is called a devil. And the adversaries of the Christ and His followers are illustrations of what is meant by the devil and his angels.

In this dramatic scene, the punishment to which the unrighteous are consigned is alluded to as *prepared*. It may be taken as a portion of the drapery of the representation. It is something more, perhaps, than this.

It has been maintained throughout these pages that reward and punishment are the inevitable evolution of human conduct. Just as the principles upon which the righteous enter a kingdom *prepared from the foundation of the world*, the antagonism manifested by the enemies of God and of His Christ is visited by a punishment which is prepared on identically the same principles. The enemies of the cross of Christ—the devil and his angels—not only are, by their cruel opposition, *ipso facto*, excluded from the kingdom,

but they must suffer in a far greater degree the damnation (loss), in spiritual darkness and degradation, which is the outcome of the evil thoughts they cherished and the cruel persecutions they enacted. As in the constitution of their spiritual nature and its development on the lines of righteousness, the kingdom is prepared from the foundation of the world ; so in the constitution of their nature and its active development on the lines of unrighteousness, the punishment is prepared for these—the devil and his angels.

But the negative as well as the active enemies of Christ share the same fate, though to the latter it must be more terrible. But though they may never have avowed themselves as enemies of Jesus, those who knew the Lord's will and did it not depart, all the same, into the fire eternal prepared for the devil and his angels.

It would be strange if *preparation* could not be predicated of the destiny of one great class as well as of the other. The divine order of Creation and Providence would suggest that it should be so. Possibility anticipates and prepares for eventuality. If alternative conduct be possible, alternative con-



sequences may be reasonably expected, and these consequences must be appropriate and just, seeing that they are the inevitable issues of action. There can be no afterthoughts with God. The divine preparation includes ; (1) the platform—human nature ; (2) the providence—opportunity ; (3) resolve and action ; (4) influence of conduct in character ; and (5) destiny.

The preparation of both the kingdom and the punishment is not from the beginning of the *αἰών*, but from the foundation of the *κόσμος*, that is, the preparation was made in the constitution and order of creation, when man was made in the image of God.

There are two other points at which we may glance in closing this section.

1. Do the rewards of the righteous and the punishments of the unrighteous admit of degrees ? Assuredly. The larger capacity comes mainly with use of faculty. And the capacity for enjoyment or suffering is wonderfully augmented by the greater light and the larger opportunity embraced or lost. There is such a thing as an *abundant* entrance into the kingdom, and some are scarcely saved.

And for the rest there are accordingly few or many stripes. With God there is always a just recompense of reward.

The other question relates to the unchangeableness of destiny.

2. To those who accept this dramatic picture as an unfolding of the principles on which the problem of MAN is to be solved, the answer is simple. Need any one on self-inspection, finding within him nothing that could possibly evoke the "Come, ye blessed" of the Son of man on His throne, yield to despair? Is there no chance of ceasing to do evil and learning to do well? What if we find ourselves still surrounded by the hungry and thirsty, the poor and the helpless? what if we still enjoy the opportunity of doing good? We will ask God's prophet Ezekiel to answer this question, for we are not aware that Jesus ever put Ezekiel out of court.

But if the wicked turn from all his sins that he hath committed (including *spoiling by violence*, and refusing *his bread to the hungry* and a *garment to the naked*), and keep all my statutes, and do that which is lawful and right, he shall surely live, he shall not die. . . . Have I any pleasure in the death of the wicked? saith the Lord God : and not

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rather that he should return from his way, and live?  
(Ezekiel xviii. *passim*.)

And the Son of man is ever ready to show  
the way of return, and give a kindly welcome to  
the penitent soul.

## IX.

### THE GENERALLY ACCEPTED EXPOSITION CONSIDERED

HERE we might leave the subject, in the hope that its treatment may commend itself to the spiritually-minded reader, or to any reader to whom the theology which has been read into the text has been a source of perplexity or distress.

There are some, however, who will think otherwise. Such is the inveteracy of preconceived opinion, such the weight of established authority, such the timidity of a traditional and venal Christianity, and such the confident reliance on this particular passage by those who teach the popular dogmas, that, if it can be done, some confirmatory testimony should be adduced.

Such testimony is not wanting. Having shown what the final judgment is, it may be made still clearer to some minds by showing what it is not.

We have been studying a mental picture. But a picture drawn by a transcendently pure and spiritual genius, can hardly be seen as what it is by one who has not a spark of imagination or spirituality about him. Some appreciation of the function and capabilities of art is necessary to the apprehension of the spirit of a great picture. The way in which this picture of the life and action of the spiritual world has been handled by commentators is something like that of the short-sighted individual who examined a great painting by rubbing his nose against the canvas, and getting its little details and accessories one by one, sometimes with the aid of a microscope, without ever being able to take in the subject as a whole, or for one moment catching the spirit of the artist.

Recalling the common explanation of this picture of our Lord as we find it in good books, in popular sermons, in gospel addresses, and in familiar hymns, our ears are dinned with the uncertainty of life, the inevitableness of death, etc. It is not likely that any one who reads this is not well acquainted with their burden.

Must it not strike a thoughtful reader as very

singular that through the whole of this and the preceding discourses of our Lord there is no allusion whatever to any of these things? There is nothing about the uncertainty of life, the proximity of death, the necessity of repentance and faith; no word of baptism, the grave, the resurrection, or the day of judgment at the end of the world.

"Stop," says one, "the end of the world is distinctly and prominently mentioned by our Lord more than once. Have you forgotten the parable in which He explains that *the harvest is the end of the world*? And the discourse which you have been explaining in the preceding pages was actually the reply given by our Lord to the question about *the end of the world*. You know the circumstances. Jesus had come away from the Temple with His disciples, and was going on His way, when they turned round, just as we should do in leaving a place of absorbing interest, and they gazed once more at the magnificent buildings they had just left; and the disciples tried to excite their Master's admiration of the grand object of national pride. It was then that Jesus predicted,

in much sadness of soul, that the time was coming when it should be a ruin. They had now got away from the multitude, and the disciples were glad to be with their Master alone on the Mount of Olives. Here they quietly but anxiously asked Him the question which they had been pondering in their hearts ever since He had foretold the destruction of the Temple. *Tell us, said they, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?* It is, therefore, clear that if the disciples' question is answered at all, the answer must be found in the narrative under discussion."

Very fairly put, good friend. We accept all you have said with the exception of one word.

And here, learned friends, translators and revisers of the New Testament, we respectfully ask you if you have not, most gratuitously, led our friend astray? Does he not rightly quote *you* when he reminds us that *the harvest is the end of the world?* Does he not also correctly quote *you* when he reminds us that the disciples asked their Master for further information about the *end of the world?* But you know very well, gentlemen,

that Jesus did not say that the harvest was the end of the *world*. It was *you* who put into the mouth of the disciples the question about the end of the *world*.

The translators are silent ; but the revisers, we imagine, answer : " Well, well ; we retain *world* in the text because——" Because what, gentlemen ? Because it was there before ! But it was your business to allow no word that was there before to remain in your revised translation, if it was the wrong word.

" But don't you see those little words in the margin ? they save our credit." <sup>1</sup>

" Gentlemen," we rejoin, " what would you say to a city merchant who cast up his ledger some thousands of pounds out, and who, when he discovered the mistake, allowed the false figures to stand in the money columns, but in the margin put a little mem. of the correct sum ? Why,

<sup>1</sup> " It has been our principle not to leave any translation or any arrangement of words, which could adapt itself to one or other of two interpretations, but rather to express as plainly as was possible that interpretation which seemed best to deserve a place in the text, and to put the other in the margin."—*Preface to New Testament, Revised Text*.



good sirs, you would cautiously avoid saying a word, probably lest you should utter something libellous of the city merchant."

We cannot explain the course adopted by these learned and conscientious men, except by taking into account the fact that they are all theologians, as well as translators and revisers. Reference has just been made to the parable of "the wheat and the tares." In this parable we are told that "the field is the world" (κοσμος): presently we come to the harvest, and we are told that the harvest is the end of the αἰών, translated "world" in the text; but in small letters in the margin the honest rogues give us "Or, consummation of the age." To an ordinary English reader the retention of the word "world" in the text cannot fail to give the impression in harmony with popular belief that "world" in both places means the same thing. But why was "world" as a translation of αἰών originally used, and why is it retained by the revisers of the New Testament? We cannot think of any other explanation than this. The translators were theologians who believed that the harvest *was* the

end of the *κοσμος*, and they put in their *belief* in this place instead of a translation of the Greek word. Can the revisers have retained it because they thought it better not to shake the popular belief? Is this loyalty to popular beliefs consistent with an eager desire to give to English readers "the pure word of God"? And if a popular dogma *depends* on support of this kind, will not earnest inquirers after truth justly grow very doubtful of a doctrine sustained by such an application of learning?

In the parable of the wheat and the tares, the harvest is the end of that dispensation of which Jesus was at this time frequently discoursing in connection with the establishment of His kingdom on its ruins.

Have there not been many ages in the world's history which have ripened to consummation, but which have not involved in their catastrophe the end of the world also? It really does not require a school-board education to enable one to perceive that when an empire has fallen, the world has not tumbled to pieces at the same time. Secular epochs which have unfolded themselves,

which have culminated, and which have finally passed away from our *κοσμος* have, nevertheless, left the world where it was. The Jewish dispensation has been superseded by the Christian. The world saw the former pass away: it remains to see the latter developing its spiritual resources and extending its influence among the nations that dwell upon its surface. *Hamlet* may be played at the theatre, but the withdrawal of *Hamlet* to make way for *King Henry the Eighth*, does not involve the pulling down of the theatre.

Once more, to return to the questions put by the disciples to our Lord. Of these our candid friend reminded us just now when he pulled us up short. The disciples asked: *When shall these things be? what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?* Apart from their very natural excitement about events which were both momentous and proximate, it would have been very unnatural and unlikely that they should put three questions in the same breath, when one or more of them related to events indefinitely remote, and in which therefore they could have no special interest. We can imagine a class of boys,

interested in Jewish history, astonishing their master by putting to him the following three questions together, thus: "Tell us about Israel's deliverance from Egypt; their entry into Canaan; and the discovery of America by Columbus." But the questions put to their Master by the disciples are supposed to refer to events much less closely related, and far wider apart in time than are these in history. It would be simply wasteful of the reader's time to point out at length that the three questions did relate to the same crisis. On this occasion the disciples were clearer in their apprehension of the drift of their Master's teaching than most of the Greek scholars who have converted epochs into globes.

It would be amusing, were it not so sad, to follow popular commentators in their explanation of these two chapters (Matt. xxiv. and xxv.) They assume that Jesus was talking of two totally different things at the same time. Sometimes one, and sometimes the other, and sometimes both together! That Jesus was discoursing of the overthrow of Judaism, and the setting up of the kingdom of heaven; and of the events that would

precede the extinction of the one and the development of the other, is clear enough to those who have nothing in the shape of a dogma they want to fasten on it. To those who were listening to His voice, Jesus, the Teacher, is clear, connected and practical.

A spiritual imagination and a mind familiar with the poetry of the Bible are necessary in order to appreciate the exuberance of imagery, the bold metaphor—the outcome of very intense exaltation of feeling, employed by our Lord in the revelation He was making of the things concerning His kingdom. His own emotion was stirred to its depths when, with irrepressible tears, He exclaimed, *O Jerusalem ! Jerusalem !* Intense was the interest gathering round this strange crisis. The dissolution of a system which to the Jews included *the joy of the whole earth !* If Jesus could have saved it He would. It was decaying : its essential power and value had departed. The spirit which had invested it for a thousand years with a certain glory had fled. The form only remained. The dead carcase had become a nuisance. It was now an obstacle in the path of

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human progress. It must be put out of the way : and that *which had, at its best, no glory by reason of the glory that excelleth, was now ready to vanish away.* Outer darkness had gathered over it. The light of the heavenly kingdom was already above the horizon and shedding some early rays over the black night of a degenerate Judaism. *But woe unto you, scribes and pharisees, hypocrites ! because ye shut the kingdom of heaven against men : for ye enter not in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering in to enter* (Matt. xxiii. 13). Is it *likely* that Jesus or His disciples could have their attention *divided* on such an occasion as this, between that which specially and personally concerned the disciples and their future course in connection with the coming events, and the almost immediate loss of their Master and friend,—and an altogether different question like the end of time, the destruction of the earth, and a succeeding general judgment?

The questions the disciples asked must have been understood by their Lord, and He did not palter with words in a double sense. Had they understood that Jesus had been speaking of the

end of the *κοσμος*, they might have asked Him when the end of the *world* might be expected, but as they certainly understood that He was thinking of "the consummation of the age" (*και τῆς συντελείας τοῦ αἰῶνος*) which He told them would be outwardly manifest in the destruction of Jerusalem, and of the events which would happen during the forty years preceding the final overthrow of the Mosaic economy, they anxiously asked Him to tell them plainly when these awful calamities coming on the nation should take place.

*Verily I say unto you, All these things shall come upon this generation* (Matt. xxiii. 36).

If we can imagine that the disciples had a doubt whether Jesus was referring to the Jewish nation, or that they could suppose He might mean some other nation than the Jews, the meaning sought to be attached to "this generation" might be worth some consideration; but it was not a question of race; the race was unquestionably the Jewish race. There is no room to suppose that some other nation could possibly be alluded to, and therefore *this generation* must have conveyed

to the disciples the idea of the generation then living.

The eschatology of popular theology puts off the end of the world to some more or less remote period according to "the Schools of the prophets" (!) which, by the way, are all at loggerheads in their prognostications ; but as they all agree that there are prophecies of our Lord yet to be fulfilled in a distant future, it has been found necessary to give a meaning to "this generation" which shall avoid a very ugly contradiction. There is a way, they say, of getting over the difficulty. They have discovered that "this generation" does not mean the people among whom Jesus was then living, but that it means "the race" as distinguished from other nations or races on the face of the earth.

This explanation seems to take away the point of the argument as applied to our Lord's contemporaries. He has just been saying that the measure of their iniquity was full—that they had followed their predecessors, and that their guilty lives had made them partakers with their fathers in the blood of the prophets. They were, indeed,



of the race to whom prophets and wise men and scribes had been sent, some of whom their fathers had killed and crucified, some of whom they had scourged in their synagogues and persecuted from city to city. And then He adds that these impending evils should *come upon this generation*, i.e. that portion of the Jewish race who were then living (Matt. xxiii. 36).

But as if He would put the nearness of the impending judgments beyond the possibility of doubt, he added : *There be some standing here, who shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom* (Matt. xvi. 28).

But for the fact that by some eminent authorities "this generation" has been explained to mean "this race," as distinguished from the then living generation of Jews, we would be content with the completely satisfactory evidence adduced. We cannot suppose that such an explanation would ever have been dreamt of, had not their exegesis of the passage compelled them to deal with this obstacle in the way of their treatment of our Lord's predictions of immediately impending troubles, and the winding up of the affairs of the dispensation.

The following texts confirm the familiar and unstrained meaning of "this generation." *I was grieved with that generation* (Heb. iii. 10). *The men of this generation* (Luke xi. 31). *Save yourselves from this untoward generation* (Acts ii. 40). *David after he had served his own generation, fell on sleep* (Acts xiii. 36); in all of which, and many others, an examination of these passages will show, that the then present generation is that part of the race referred to.

The *suddenness* of some of the coming events connected with the consummation of the age would take the inhabitants of the city of Jerusalem by surprise. It was to prepare the minds of His followers that Jesus uttered the note of warning. In the siege of Jerusalem their lives would be in jeopardy if they remained within its walls. He told them what they must do in that crisis; and those who remembered His words and acted on His advice were saved in the overwhelming destruction which came upon the devoted city.

So He gave His disciples the parable of the virgins, to stimulate their watchfulness and patience also. And lest they might forget, or grow care-

less, or even sceptical, because "my Lord delayeth his coming," he pointed out that there would be a considerable interval before *all* these things should be accomplished.

But so thoroughly have our preachers and hymn-writers fastened upon these parables and predictions of *things that must* (then) *shortly come to pass*, *i.e.* at the end of the Jewish dispensation and the planting of Christianity, a doctrine of their own, that they have perverted it into a representation of a "general judgment" at the end of the world, after a "resurrection of the body" from the grave. Thus the pious Wesley puts it in his hymn—

"Ye virgin souls arise  
With all the *dead* awake!"

Whereas the parable of the virgins was simply a kindly warning to the disciples to be watchful and prepared, so that they might escape to the mountains when the fulfilment of his prediction should take place.

In Matt. xxiv. 42-44 our Lord inculcates the duty of *watchfulness*, in anticipation of His speedy advent. In Matt. xxv. 1-13, the same duty is enforced on the disciples by the parable of the

virgins ; “ *Watch, therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour when the Son of man cometh;*” almost the same words as are recorded in Matt. xxiv. Can this be questioned? If not, so far as this Gospel is concerned, a general judgment at the end of the world must be abandoned.

*Faithfulness*, as well as watchfulness, was enjoined on His disciples by their great Prophet. This is illustrated in Matt. xxv. 14-31, in the parable of the Talents.

But are there not parallel passages in the Epistles, which imply a general judgment at the end of the world?

There *may* be passages in which such a doctrine is taught ; but it is not taught in the following : “ *But concerning the times and seasons,*” etc. The exhortation applies personally to those to whom the Epistle is addressed, *Watch, and be sober* (1 Thes. v. 1-6). *But the end of all things is at hand, i.e.* the end of all the things belonging to the dispensation, and the judgment-seat of Moses (1 Peter iv. 7). In this connection the Epistle to the Hebrews should be read throughout, especially viii. 7-13, ending with : *But that which is becoming*

*old and waxeth aged is nigh unto vanishing away.* Also x. 1, *The Law, the shadow of good things to come*; verse 25, *Not forsaking the assembling of yourselves together, as the custom of some is, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as ye see the day approaching.* Just the anticipation and preparation and watching which the Master enjoined.

The poetic element is the proper vehicle of spiritual truth. The prophets, when rising to an unusually grand spiritual conception, break forth in the loftiest strains of poetry. But traditional theology seems to have assigned the place of poetry to the regions of darkness. It runs away with the universal government of the Son of man and puts it off to the end of the world—a result instead of a process; a mere close of an administration instead of the administration itself; a summing up of a life instead of a law of living. The removal of Judaism is really not a taking away, except as a scaffolding which for the time concealed the permanent structure.

The practice of preaching sermons from an isolated text of Scripture has unquestionably the

advantage of enabling the preacher, quite unfettered by the exigencies of the context, to give his own thoughts and feelings, or his theology free play. But it is a practice which very often leaves the Scripture unexplained, and not seldom tortured into an expression of the preacher's religious notions, regardless of the subject really discussed by the sacred Writer. To multitudes of Christian persons texts are as familiar as old friends, but what they meant as they came from the pens of the Evangelists or the Apostles few could tell. This evil is due mainly to popular preaching.

## X

### CONCLUSION

THE Law was the shadow of good things to come. Had it been always recognised as a shadow—a shadowing forth—of Christ's heavenly kingdom, and nothing *more* than a shadow, we might perhaps conceive the possibility of a peaceful and happy and gradual *euthanasia* of the shadowy dispensation of the Law before the ever-increasing light and glory of the Gospel age. But we need not speculate on a possibility for which all the conditions for making it an actuality were wanting. We know what happened—how the degeneracy deepened and widened out; how the heart and life of the nation had died away especially in the leaders of the people; and how they brought down upon themselves the severest denunciations of our Lord.

But after the solemn warning that all the

existing institutes of religion among the Jews are going to be swept away, we surely may well expect some higher manifestation of God. Sweep away Judaism by the agency of an overwhelming destruction, and give the bewildered disciples nothing to replace it? Nothing? Then agnosticism may fairly occupy the field. Atheism, if it be capable of joy, may rejoice! But Jesus would have wept far bitterer tears over Jerusalem, and in His awful denunciation of the scribes and pharisees we might have detected more than a trace of compassion, if He could not also tell of something far better for Jew and Gentile. But we can see how the divine wrath poured out on apostate Judaism was also the expression of the divine love for all the race, because the destruction of Judaism was a step forward in the divine manifestation.

All we have to do is to trace the steps in this prophecy and these events which lead up to the permanent and abiding institution of Christ's spiritual kingdom — abiding because spiritual. Outward forms of religion may change or may be abolished, but we get to the very core of



religion when we come to God as a spirit, and to the Christ as the spiritual manifestation of the Father. And it is this ultimate manifestation in the Christian dispensation which is illustrated in Matthew xxv. 31-46, and which, because purely spiritual in its principles and working, cannot be superseded.

To have gone so minutely into detail concerning the abolition of Judaism as a means of grace, and the various events which should precede and accompany it, without adding a word as to the administration of the kingdom of heaven, which must succeed it, would have left the disciples in dismay, and without comfort or hope.

The abolition of Judaism was but a means to an end. It behoved their Master to disclose to His disconcerted disciples the purport of the action of God in the momentous events which were to bring the city and all its religious life and observances to an end. And Jesus did not leave them comfortless. He told them of the kingdom. He taught them to pray "Thy kingdom come." And through the vista of fiery trial and destruction in the last days, at the end of the dispensation, He

put before their spiritual imagination a picture of the permanent and universal government of the future. *When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him,*—His Apostles themselves (as in another place) being represented as also sitting on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel. Even this would seem to His disciples a far-off period, only to be reached after passing through unprecedented trouble and tribulation such as the world would not witness again. It was not therefore unnatural that the disciples' attention should be concentrated more upon the impending distress than upon the glorious future which was to follow. Their thoughts and their questions evidently turned upon the present and the near future: "When shall these things be? what shall be the sign of thy coming *and* of the consummation of the age?" There was quite enough, assuredly, to fill their memory, to excite their imagination, and to arouse their apprehension in the communications now being made to them. A discussion of such a far-off event, however momentous, as the end of the world, would be quite out of place just now; would have no

practical force ; and would hardly be remembered had their Master had any communication to make to them about it.

There are many important questions very closely related to the subject of this essay, which lie beyond the scope of our present purpose. We have confined ourselves to the exposition of a particular discourse of our Lord. We have followed Him where *He* has led us. Aspects of His personal character and work, of the deepest practical interest, must not be omitted in a complete survey of the Gospel dispensation, but our limits preclude a discussion of the doctrines of Christianity as a whole.

A word to the followers of the Christ may perhaps be permitted in conclusion.

1. Do not carry the narrowness and exclusiveness of Judaism into Christianity. Judaism was never intended to meet the requirements of *all the nations* : the conception to a Jew would be distasteful, and the attempt to carry it out would be suicidal. The Jewish church was not, could not be, a missionary church. Christianity is the *universal* religion.

2. Do not hesitate to follow the Lord in recognising in *any* nation on the face of the earth, and identifying yourself with, those who manifest His divine spirit in practical sympathy with the weak, the oppressed, the suffering. Jesus has set us an example.

3. Christian missionaries! your task is a difficult one. But you have not to bring your heathen into the simple ways of Christianity through the elaborate gates of Judaism. If you are prepared to accept those gleams of light which have shone, and which are doubtless still shining, as tokens of the divine presence among the children of men, even in the dark places of the earth, your courage need not flag. If you do not succeed in leading your converts much farther than the point on which the Son of man concentrates our attention in this grand dramatic picture, be of good cheer. You and they will doubtless receive the welcome, "Enter ye into the joy of your Lord."

4. Beware of party walls! alike inimical to the genius, the spirit, and the life of Christianity. "What? would you have no walls at all?" Why

should we? *Before him are gathered all the nations.* There is no wall of separation between these nations as they stand before the great white throne,—there is only one line of separation, but it is purely spiritual, and it may always be crossed.

5. Beware lest in building or keeping up party walls, you shut out the Christ Himself. It was of a Roman centurion our Lord said : *I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel. And I say unto you, that many shall come from the east and the west, and shall recline with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven : but the sons of the kingdom shall be cast forth into the outer darkness : there shall be the weeping and gnashing of teeth.*



## APPENDIX

### A.—THE INFLUENCE OF HEATHEN RELIGIOUS IDEAS UPON JEWISH AND CHRISTIAN CREEDS

IT is not difficult to detect, and trace to their heathen sources, some of the accretions of Jewish belief,—accretions which took firm root in popular conceptions of religion, and which were carried into the early Christian Church, and which have since moulded or modified the theology of the Christian centuries.

The following extract from a valuable essay by the Rev. Sir George W. Cox, M.A.,<sup>1</sup> is most instructive :—

“With Iranian dualism the Jews were brought into contact during their exile in Babylonia. To ascribe to the Jews as a people up to this time any tendency to monotheism is simply to throw over our eyes a veil which must effectually prevent our seeing the facts of the case and involve us in a labyrinth of errors. Unless the Hebrew prophets are from first to last mistaken, they were merely a few voices crying out in the wilderness of a sensual, corrupt, and cruel idolatry. The religion of the Hebrew people, as distinguished from that of their prophets, down to the Babylonish captivity, was the religion of Phœnicians, Canaanites, and Assyrians ; and in their exile they showed the force of old habit in their readiness to adopt the Zoroastrian demonology, which connected Satan with the prince of the devils, the source of wicked thoughts. The victory of the

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<sup>1</sup> *Christianity and Evolution : Modern Problems of Faith.* J. Nisbet and Co., 1887.

Iranian theology was thus complete. Henceforth the Jewish mind was possessed with the notion of two hierarchies, the one heavenly, the other diabolical; and this notion acquired increased strength in the earlier ages of the Christian era. The nations which became Christian had filled the world with gods and demons, each with his own special sphere and office. These deities the Christian teachers dethroned; but far from attempting to destroy them, they were careful to insist that they had always been, and must for ever continue to be, malignant devils. But unless their fellowship was to come to an end, they must be under the rule of some king; and this king was found in the Semitic Satan. The theology which sprang from this root endowed the king of the fallen angels with the powers of omnipresence and omniscience, and made him succeed in wresting from the righteous God against whom he fought all but an insignificant fraction of the whole race of mankind. . . .

“But Satan, the Devil, Ahi, Vritra, are all malignant beings; and if to this malignity be added the powers ascribed to the Iranian Ahriman, and the Jewish Satan, we see before us the foundation on which all the descriptions of hell given in any age of Christianity may most easily be raised. . . . The Greek had his paradise for the high and heroic among mankind, and his Tartaros for those who had been guilty of colossal crimes; but all others passed into a land of shadows. Of any notion of purgatorial sufferings which should fit these feeble ghosts for a better or happier existence beyond we find no trace, unless we are to find it in the case of those of whom Socrates speaks as cast forth from Tartaros, and as finally delivered from it when they have received forgiveness from the victims of their crimes. This is, indeed, a vastly higher conception than that of the hell to which certain Christian teachers seem so partial; for if the Socratic Tartaros resounds with the wail of the wicked, it echoes the cry of anguish and sorrow, not of malignant and murderous fury. We have to betake ourselves first to the east to find ‘the hideous inventory of torture—caldrons of boiling oil and liquid fire, black dungeons and rivers of filth, vipers and vultures and cannibals, thorns and spears, and red-hot pincers, and whips of flames;’<sup>1</sup> and then from the east we have to come back to the west if we would see the horrors of these awful abodes intensified a thousandfold. Here the pictures of Christian teachers

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<sup>1</sup> Tylor's *Primitive Culture*, ii. 89.



represent the dwellers in hell as glaring and staring with 'the fierce fiery eyes of hate, spite, frenzied rage, yells of blasphemy, concentrated hate echoing along the lurid vaults, every one hating every one.' Here also amidst these multitudes from whom all restraint has been removed, the same teachers have placed 'the truant schoolgirl, the refined and sensitive poet, the unbelieving philosopher, and even babes who have died unbaptized'" (pp. 246-248).

If this were true, then, so far as these are concerned, the divine manifestation is withdrawn—worse than withdrawn, for they can only know God *not as what He is, but as what He is not*.

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#### B.—ON THE PAROUSIA.

There are two explanations of the "last judgment," which, differing in almost all other respects, are at one in this—namely, that it is a most momentous event at the end of an epoch in human history. According to one it takes place at the end of the Jewish dispensation; according to the other, it takes place at the "end of the world." According to one, it is *past*; according to the other, it is yet *future*.

The explanation that "the judgment" is a past event, is brought under notice in a recent volume on the second coming of Christ.<sup>1</sup> The able and painstaking Author has critically examined every passage in the New Testament, having directly or remotely any eschatological

<sup>1</sup> *The Parousia; a critical inquiry into the New Testament doctrine of our Lord's Second Coming.* By J. Stuart Russell, M.A., D.D., 8vo., 1887.

bearing. No candid, uncommitted theologian can fail to see the force of testimony in favour of Dr. Russell's interpretation. He has simply destroyed the unprofitable business of the ingenious arithmetical triflers who assume the character and function of prophets. History has already absorbed the events shadowed forth in pre-Christian and apostolic days; and for the future we have the kingdom which cannot be moved, and the broad and eternal principles of the divine government, in the more glorious ministration of the Spirit.

The obscurity in which "prophetical" teaching has enshrouded many an allusion in the New Testament is removed by *The Parousia*; and as the result of an enlightened and rigid exegesis, the Scriptures grow increasingly luminous, harmonious, and practical.

Having adopted, as the result of his impartial and careful investigation, the opinion that all prophecy is fulfilled, Mr. Russell seems to have failed to discriminate between allusions to impending events, and the exposition in this picture of "final judgment," of the eternal principles according to which God is governing the world, "by that man whom he hath ordained"—Jesus Christ. See Paul's address to the Athenians (Acts xvii. 22-31).

In Matthew xxiv. and xxv. Jesus addressed His disciples in great fulness and definiteness on the events which should mark the supreme crisis in the Mosaic economy. But sufficient evidence has been adduced to prove that the close of that dispensation was the beginning of a kingdom which should have no end,—that it was the inauguration,

not of *another passing event*, but of a constitution and administration, which would never be superseded while the world remains. Its purely spiritual character is the pledge of its perpetuity as well as of its universality.

Our learned Author does not see this in the closing verses of Matthew xxv. Nor does he see that between the rejection of the popular belief, as based on this Scripture, there is any alternative but the acceptance of so narrow a limitation as he proposes. Maintaining that we have here no more than a description of the last of a series of events, Dr. Russell finds it necessary to harmonise with his conclusion certain texts which admit, and which even require, a much wider application.

Thus he says: "We have here, not the final judgment of the whole human race, but that of the guilty nation, or nations, of Palestine" (p. 108). Here he forgets that the *guiltless* as well as the guilty were to be "gathered before Him." This is an accident, probably resulting from the circumstance that the Author's attention was too exclusively concentrated on "the guilty nation or nations of Palestine."

But the limitation of "all the nations" to the inhabitants of Judea appears not only unnecessary to the general argument of the Book, but utterly inadequate to the subject. For the judgment seat of Christ is only one aspect of the Christian dispensation under which *we* live.

Psalmist and Prophet, shut up mainly to the history and the future of the chosen people of Israel, could not

always be restrained within these narrow bounds. The religious sentiment, inspired by the Holy Spirit of God, will sometimes burst forth in joyous and all-embracing strains such as are recorded in Psalm lxvii.—

“God be merciful unto us, and bless us, and cause his face to shine upon us; that thy way may be known upon earth, thy saving health among all nations. Let the peoples praise thee, O God; let all the peoples praise thee. O let the nations be glad and sing for joy: for thou shalt judge the peoples with equity, and govern the nations upon earth. Let the peoples praise thee, O God; let all the peoples praise thee. The earth hath yielded her increase: God, even our own God, shall bless us. God shall bless us; and all the ends of the earth shall fear him.”

What if Isaiah's prophecy be mainly of the Jewish nation? Shall we, in our penury of faith, and the narrowing influence of “privilege” on the human heart, dim the brightness of his glorious vision, when, stretching far beyond the boundary walls of Jerusalem, he sees:

“Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low: and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain: and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it. The voice of one saying, Cry. And one said, What shall I cry? All flesh is grass, and all the goodliness thereof is as the flower of the field: the grass withereth, the flower fadeth: because the breath of the Lord bloweth upon it: surely the people is grass. The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand for ever” (Isa. xl. 4-8).

Dr. Russell thinks that the great commission, “Go, and teach *all the nations*,” was understood by the disciples as applying to no other than the people of Palestine; and says that “if they knew that their business was to evangelise the world, they were culpably

remiss." Jesus told His disciples to *begin* at Jerusalem ; He did not forbid them to go elsewhere. We are thankful the Author of *The Parousia* does not directly accuse St. Paul of exceeding his orders. For we have read how this apostle gratefully acknowledged the grace of Christ given to him expressly *that he might preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ ; and to make all men see what is the dispensation of the mystery which from all ages hath been hid in God who created all things* (Eph. iii. 9, 10).

If Jesus pointed out to His disciples that the Gospel should be preached among all nations before the final catastrophe should come upon that generation, we are not without evidence that to *the then known world* it was actually proclaimed. That it was so preached we have the testimony of Paul himself, and even apart from that testimony we might infer it from the apostle's letters to the Gentile churches.<sup>1</sup>

Considering the very short period of time that had elapsed since our Lord's resurrection, it is clear from the second chapter of the Acts of the Apostles that the proclamation of the Gospel had covered a large geographical area, and that it had already produced very widespread effects in " Pontus and Asia, in Phrygia and Pamphylia, in Egypt and the parts of Libya about Cyrene,—Rome, among both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabians," etc. (see Acts ii. 7-12).

The argument which would limit the subjects of " the

<sup>1</sup> Col. i. 23 ; Gal. i. 16.

judgment" to the Palestinian Jews would probably be found equally valid against the universal preaching of the Gospel, in modern, as well as in apostolic times.

While our Lord's personal ministry, and that of the Seventy, was confined to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, the missionary labours of Paul and others were not less necessary to the accomplishment of the divine purpose in the world-wide promulgation of the Gospel.

Only the supposed necessity of a theory could explain the torture to which the Author of *The Parousia* puts the apostle Paul, when he alludes to the day when God judgeth the secrets of men according to his Gospel, by Jesus Christ.<sup>1</sup> What is the general argument in the chapter from which these words are taken? This: that both Jew and Gentile are amenable to the broad, searching law of God, whether that law be written on the heart of the heathen, or on the tables of stone by Moses.

The universal preaching of the Gospel was anticipated by Jesus when He enjoined that wheresoever this Gospel should be preached *in the whole world*,<sup>2</sup> the mention of that memorable expression of precious sympathy in the act of the woman with the alabaster box of ointment should not be forgotten.

In view of such testimony the restricted sense in which Dr. Russell understands the great assemblage before the judgment-seat of Christ cannot be sustained.

Pressed by the same supposed necessity, the Author

<sup>1</sup> Rom. ii. 16.

<sup>2</sup> Matt. xxvi. 13.

of *The Parousia* would limit "the kingdom of Christ," and synonymous phrases, to a period in the history of the Jewish people which has long since passed away.

That the kingdom has not passed away we have the testimony of the angel to the mother of our Lord: "Of his kingdom there shall be no end" (Luke i. 33). And, although as a *dispensation* superseding the institutions of Judaism the Son of man had not yet come in His kingdom, when Jesus alluded to it, as in Matthew xvi. 28, yet in its essential nature, and in its spiritual power, it was a *fact*, when Paul testified to the Colossians, that he and his fellow-Christians *had been* translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son (Col. i. 13).

The least in the kingdom of heaven was greater than John the Baptist; and we know the actual nature of this kingdom from the definition given by Paul: "The kingdom of heaven is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost."

*We* live in "Gospel times"; but it is not less true that the Gospel was preached unto Abraham (Gal. iii. 8). The disciples were taught to pray: "Thy kingdom come"; but we are again and again reminded that His throne is for ever and ever. *Thy kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and thy dominion endureth throughout all generations* (see Psalm cxlv. *passim*).

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